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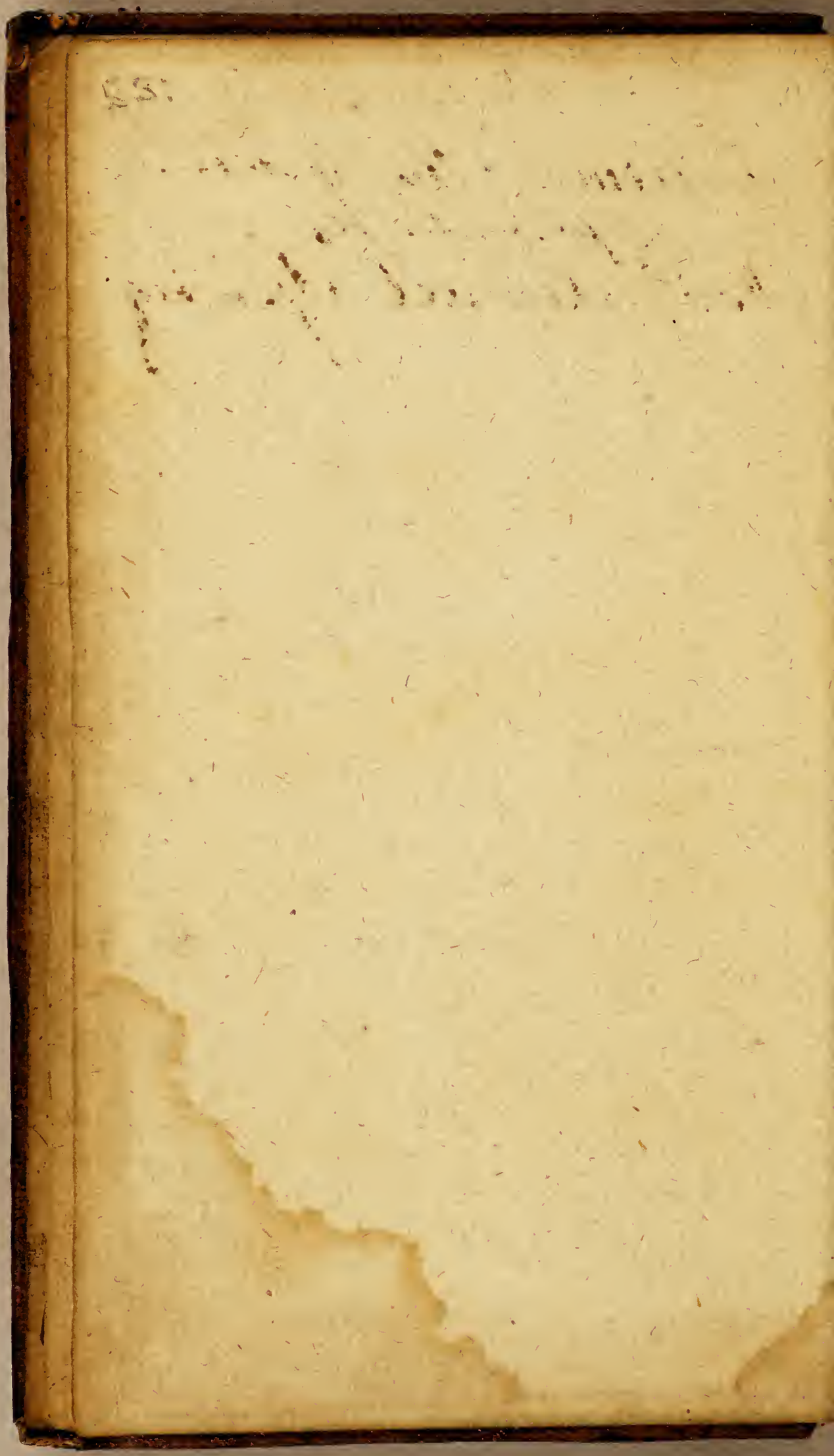

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INQUIRY

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INTO

THE NATURE

OF

TRUE HOLINESS.

By SAMUEL HOPKINS, *D. D.*

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PREFACE.

SINCE *holineſs is, by the confeſſion of all, the ſum of all moral excellence, and the higheſt and moſt neceſſary attainment; it is of the laſt importance that we ſhould well underſtand the nature of it and diſtinguiſh it from all counterfeits, This will help us to underſtand the Bible; to form right conceptions of the divine perfections, and diſtinguiſh true religion from that which is falſe. Wrong conceptions of the diſtinguiſhing nature of holineſs lead to all kinds of deluſion in religion. And, on the other hand, juſt and clear apprehenſions of this are the beſt preſervative from fatal miſtakes; and have the happieſt tendency to remove*

the difference and opposition in sentiments, and the sad divisions, so common among professing Christians: And to bring them to "speak the same thing, and be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment."

I humbly conceive there has been too little attention to the nature of holiness, among divines in general; and that a proper and intelligible definition of it is not easily to be found in bodies of divinity, or elsewhere. And most of those who think it a very easy matter to tell what holiness is, and that we are all agreed in this, have been contented with a set of words, which express no distinct ideas; but leave the thing wholly in the dark. They will perhaps say, God's holiness is his purity. *If it is asked, in what does this*

purity *consist? The common answer is*, In that which is opposite to all sin, the greatest impurity. *We have now got what, I think, is the most common definition of holiness. But who is the wiser? This does not help us to any idea of this* purity, *unless we know what sin is. But this cannot be known, so long as we know not what holiness is: For we do not learn what holiness is, by* first *obtaining the idea of sin; but we must first know what holiness, or, which is the same, what the divine law is, in order to the knowledge of sin.*

Some have attempted to tell what holiness is, by saying, It is not properly a distinct attribute of God; but the beauty and glory of all his moral perfections. *But we get no idea by these words, till we are told* what is this beauty and glory. *To*

ſay, it is holineſs, *is ſaying nothing, or that which is no better.*

Under a conviction of this too general inattention to the nature of holineſs----the great defect in the moſt common deſcriptions of it; the importance of diſtinct and clear ideas of it. I preſent to the public the following inquiry; *hoping it may give ſome light on the ſubject, and aſſiſt ſuch as are willing to inquire into the nature of holineſs, as deſcribed in divine revelation.*

In this, however, I do not pretend to be an original. Preſident EDWARDS, *in his diſſertation on the nature of true virtue, has given the ſame account of holineſs, for ſubſtance, though under a different name, which the reader will find in the following inquiry. All I can pretend to, as an improvement on*

him, is to have explained ſome things more fully than he did; and more particularly ſtated the oppoſition of holineſs to ſelf-love; and ſhown that this repreſentation of holineſs is agreeable to the ſcripture: And to have anſwered ſome objections he has not mentioned, and made a number of inferences.

May every reader remember, that whatever are his ſpeculations; yet without holineſs, no man ſhall ſee the *LORD. And let him who reads, and is in any meaſure enlightened, and ſtrengthened in the way of holineſs, by what is now offered to his peruſal, bleſs God, and give all the glory to* HIM.

NEWPORT,
June, 2, 1773.

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An INQUIRY into the Nature of *TRUE HOLINESS*, &c.

SECTION I.

SOME general, introductory obſervations concerning the nature of true HOLINESS.

I. HOLINESS is, in all Reſpects, perfectly conſiſtent with right reaſon, and agreeable to its dictates: Or reaſon, properly exerciſed and improved, will in all caſes, and without fail, determine holineſs to be what it really is. However vitiated the taſte may be, and the heart diſreliſh, hate and oppoſe true holineſs, the ſame

perſon's reaſon and judgement may pronounce it to be holineſs. Though the reaſon of man is liable to be blinded and prejudiced, by the vicious taſte and reigning luſts of his heart, and often is ſo to an amazing degree; yet it is not always and neceſſarily ſo blinded; but may, and often does, dictate the truth in this matter; and always does when reaſon is properly exerciſed. Hence men of corrupt minds, enemies to holineſs in heart and practice, may reaſon well about the nature of holineſs, and be able to prove in what it conſiſts, by inconteſtible arguments. Hence the propriety of *reaſoning* on this ſubject. And we may be ſure, that ſo far as we reaſon right, and find what reaſon dictates, we have found the truth.

II. HOLINESS is that in which the

higheſt enjoyment or happineſs conſiſts; and is really the greateſt good in the univerſe. It, in a ſenſe and degree, puts us in poſſeſſion of all good. That therefore which gives true enjoyment, and tends to the higheſt, perfect, univerſal good of intelligent beings, is true holineſs; and nothing elſe can be worthy of that name.

It is true, that holineſs may be the occaſion of miſery; and a perfectly holy being may not be perfectly happy, in certain particular circumſtances. As the imperfect holineſs of the ſaints in this life, is the occaſion of pain and diſtreſs of mind, which no unholy perſon can have: And Chriſt, in the human nature, though perfectly holy, was ſubject to great pain and ſufferings. But this is not

properly owing to any thing in the nature and tendency of holineſs, but the peculiar circumſtances which attend it. Therefore thoſe exerciſes of mind which give a being the higheſt enjoyment his nature is capable of, and put him in poſſeſſion of all poſſible good, and at the ſame time promote the greateſt happineſs of the whole, is true holineſs. And thoſe exerciſes which have not this nature, but the contrary, are oppoſed to holineſs.

III. HOLINESS is the higheſt poſſible excellence in the univerſe. It is that in which the higheſt and moſt perfect beauty, and all real worth do ſummarily conſiſt. It is, in ſuch a ſenſe and degree, the excellence and perfection of intelligent beings, that without it they have no real

excellence, nor any true worth; but they are, in themſelves, odious, deſpicable, and worſe than nothing. The more they have of natural capacity, powers and endowments, if they have no holineſs, the further they are from all real excellence, and the more hateful; becauſe they, not being holy, are of courſe more oppoſed to holineſs, or have more of that which is moral evil, than beings of leſs natural capacities could have.

If holineſs could be baniſhed from the univerſe, conſidered as comprehending Creator and creatures, and ſhould actually ceaſe, there would be no real excellence or worth in univerſal exiſtence: But it would be in truth infinitely worſe than univerſal nothing. Ho-

lineſs is the beauty, excellence, brightneſs, glory and perfection of God, by whatever name it is called. And this is true of all intelligent creatures. Therefore, if we can find what true moral beauty, worth or excellence is, it will determine what is holineſs.

IV. HOLINESS is that by which intelligent beings are united together, in the higheſt, moſt perfect and beautiful union. It conſiſts in that harmony of affection, and union of heart, by which the intelligent ſyſtem becomes ONE, ſo far as holineſs prevails; which fixes every being, by his own inclination and choice, in his proper place, ſo as in the beſt manner to promote the good of the whole.---There is no moral beauty or happineſs among

intelligent beings, without harmony and union of heart. All ſin is oppoſed to this; it ſets intelligences in oppoſition to each other, and ſpreads the moſt diſagreeable, unhappy diſcord. But holineſs unites them; it conſiſts in the higheſt and moſt excellent kind of union in nature. It is the moſt excellent and perfect bond, by which intelligent beings are, by their own voluntary exertions, united and cemented together, in the ſtrongeſt and moſt happy manner. If we can, with any degree of certainty then, determine what affection of heart that is, which thus unites intelligent beings, we may be equally certain that we have found the object of our inquiry, viz. true holineſs.

V. HOLINESS is eſſentially, in nature and kind, the ſame thing in all beings that are capable of it. Holineſs in God is not different, in nature and kind, from the holineſs of creatures. God's holineſs differs from the holineſs of creatures in degree, and in circumſtances, or in mode and form, agreeable to the infinite degree of his exiſtence, and the different manner and circumſtances in which he exiſts; but is of the ſame nature, and ſo eſſentially the ſame thing, in both. We have the greateſt certainty of this, in that holineſs in the creature is, in ſcripture, called the image of God, and that by which they partake of the divine nature; and is repreſented to be the holy ſpirit of God, or God's holineſs,

dwelling and acting in them; by which God dwells in them, and they dwell in God.

Holiness in different creatures may alſo differ in ſome circumſtances, and in the particular form and manner of its exerciſes, owing to their very different ſtate, relations and circumſtances. Thus, the holineſs of creatures, who never have ſinned, is, in ſome reſpects, as to the form and manner of its exerciſes different from the holineſs of thoſe who have ſinned, and being redeemed by Chriſt, are recovered to holineſs. And in this lies the difference between what is called legal holineſs, and evangelical holineſs; the former being the holineſs of angels, and of man before

he ſinned; the latter is the holineſs of thoſe who are redeemed from among men. This difference might eaſily be pointed out; but this will not be attempted here, as we are inquiring into the general nature of true holineſs. This, I ſay, is the ſame in all creatures; and therefore has but one and the ſame rule, the law of God, and conſiſts in conformity to that.

THEREFORE, if we can find what is the nature of divine holineſs, we may be certain that we have found what is the holineſs of creatures; and ſo *vice verſa*. This therefore muſt be kept in mind, as it may be of uſe in our inquiry.

VI. TRUE holineſs is in its own nature one ſimple, uncompounded thing. It is not made up of differ-

ent and various kinds of exerciſes, properties and ingredients, which may exiſt diſtinct and ſeperate, or in any degree independent of each other, and being put together make one compound: But, in oppoſition to this, is perfectly ſimple and uncompounded.

THIS is moſt certainly true of the divine holineſs. And if holineſs in creatures is of the ſame nature and kind, being a participation of the divine nature, and conſiſts in the ſpirit of God imparted to the ſoul, and dwelling in it, which is the ſcriptural repreſentation of the matter, as has been obſerved; then this muſt be true of creature holineſs.

HOLINESS is in ſcripture called life: It is indeed the higheſt and

moſt perfect kind of life. Now life is one ſimple thing: It is not compounded of different things, and made up of various parts, which differ in nature and kind, and do not imply and involve the whole. This may receive ſome illuſtration, perhaps, from animal life. This, as it appears in exerciſes towards different objects, in various circumſtances, and by different ſenſes, ſight, taſte, hearing, &c. is called by different names; but it is the ſame ſimple, uncompounded thing in its nature, and in all its exerciſes: It is the ſame animal life, in whatever form or name it appears. Every property and motion, is the motion and property of this ſame life, and implies the whole. So holineſs, though it has

obtained different names, as it is exerciſed in different circumſtances, and towards different objects, is the ſame moſt ſimple, undivided ſpiritual life. This remark may be of uſe in the inquiry upon which we are entering.

VII. The nature and diſtinguiſhing properties of true holineſs are ſo clearly deſcribed in the holy ſcriptures, that nothing is needed but to underſtand the moſt important truths revealed there, in order to know what true holineſs is, as diſtinguiſhed from all counterfeits. It is one chief end of divine revelation to make known and aſcertain the diſtinguiſhing nature of true holineſs. The great end of divine revelation is to make known the true God to man, and manifeſt

his glory; eſpecially to reveal his moral perfections, which is his glory. And this is the ſame with his holineſs; for this is all the moral perfection in the univerſe. And ſo far as the Bible reveals the duty and happineſs of man, which is doubtleſs done with all poſſible clearneſs, and in the wiſeſt and beſt manner, juſt ſo far is the nature of true holineſs revealed; for in this both the duty and happineſs of man conſiſt. Therefore he only underſtands his Bible, who has learned what is true holineſs: And he who is ignorant of the nature and properties of this, is blind to the moſt leading, important things contained in divine revelation. He knows not God; he is ignorant of the divine law, and the goſpel of

Jeſus Chriſt, and his own true intereſt. The Bible is indeed a ſealed book to him, and he is in darkneſs even until now. But he who has a true idea of holineſs, knoweth him who is holy in all his works: He underſtands the goſpel, and walketh in the light. This at once ſhews how important the inquiry is upon which we are entering; and the great help we may expect from the Bible, in determining this queſtion; and conſequently, the reaſonableneſs and importance of attending conſtantly to that, in all our inquiries of this nature.

THESE obſervations, being kept in view, will greatly help us in our inquiry into the nature of true holineſs, and ſerve as land-marks to direct us. If reaſon, when properly

improved will direct us to it---If it be that alone in which true happineſs conſiſts, and which tends to the greateſt general good---If it be the higheſt, the ſupreme beauty and excellence; that in which all the real worth of intelligences conſiſts, and without which the intellectual, moral world would be infinitely worſe than nothing---If it unites intelligent beings together, in the moſt amiable, happy manner and degree; and is the only bond of ſuch union---If it be, in its nature, one ſimple thing; ſo that if we can find what is any one thing which comes into the nature of holineſs; or any thing which is properly a branch of holineſs, we have found, in that, every thing eſſential.---If holineſs be the ſame in nature and kind, in

whatever being it is found---If one chief deſign of divine revelation be to teach us what holineſs is, and it is from the beginning to the end of the Bible held up to view in the moſt clear and intelligible manner, in the beſt way to give us a true idea of it, as it ſtands diſtinguiſhed from every thing elſe; ſo that he who runs may read it. (*a*)---If all this be true; then ſurely nothing can be more certainly, and with greater eaſe determined, than the queſtion before us; as we may be ſure, on the one hand, that whatſoever does not agree to all theſe, is not true holineſs, however it may ſeem to agree to ſome: And on the other hand, that which is found to bear all theſe marks, has

(*a*) See Iſaiah xxxv. 8.

the divine ſtamp, and may be ſafely fixed upon, without any further reſearches.

SECTION II.

Wherein it is ſhewed that holineſs conſiſts in LOVE.

THE law of God is the ſtandard of all moral rectitude, or holineſs. Holineſs conſiſts in conformity to this, and in nothing elſe: Therefore the knowledge of the precepts of the moral law, decides the queſtion before us; for whatever the holy law of God requires is holineſs, and nothing elſe can deſerve the name. Our divine teacher has, in his great wiſdom and goodneſs, given us a ſummary of

the divine law, in the following words: "Thou ſhalt LOVE the "Lord thy God with all thy heart, "and with all thy ſoul, and with "all thy mind. This is the firſt "and great commandment. And "the ſecond is like unto it. Thou "ſhalt LOVE thy neighbour as "thyſelf. Upon theſe two com-"mandments hang all the law and "the prophets." (*a*)

HERE all obedience to the law of God is reduced to one thing, LOVE; love to God and our neighbour, including ourſelves; this is the whole that is required. Therefore this is the whole of true holineſs; it conſiſts in this love and in nothing elſe. When Chriſt ſays, "on theſe two "commandments *hang* all the law

(*a*) Matt. xxii. 37, 38, 39, 40.

"and the prophets," he muſt be underſtood to aſſert, that the whole of the law and the prophets, all that is required in them, is *love*. All depends upon this; ſo that if love be removed, all that is required is removed; the law and the prophets come to nothing, and fall to the ground. Take love away, and there is nothing left that is required in the whole of divine revelation. If love was not the whole that the law requires, it could not be ſaid to be wholly *ſuſpended* on this, ſo as utterly to fall, if love be excluded: For the law would ſtill exiſt, as there would be yet ſomething commanded.

But if there could be any doubt about the meaning of theſe words of our ſaviour, St. Paul has ex-

plained them, when he ſays, "LOVE is the fulfilling of the "law; for *all* the law is fulfilled "in *one word*, even in this; thou "ſhalt love thy neighbour as thy-"ſelf." (*a*) If *all* the law be fulfilled in love, then this is all that the law requires; for the law is not fulfilled, unleſs the whole is given which it requires. Therefore love is the whole of that obedience which the law requires. Perfect, ſupreme love to God, and that love to our neighbour which is implied in it, i. e. loving him as ourſelves: This LOVE expreſſed in all proper ways, which is implied in its being perfect, is the fulfilling of the law; this is true holineſs. Therefore the

(*a*) Rom. xiii. 10. Gal. 5. 14.

love of God, and keeping his commandments is ſpoken of as one thing: "For this is the love of God, that "we keep his commandments." (*a*) This could not be, if there were any obedience or holineſs, which is not love; or any command which required any thing leſs or more than love.

THUS far then we go on ſure ground, and have the greateſt certainty that holineſs conſiſts in LOVE. And all the difficulty in the queſtion before us is in determining what is meant by love; what is the nature and kind of that love which the law requireth. This will be particularly attended to in the following ſection.

(*a*) 1 John. v. 3.

SECTION III.

Wherein it is inquired what that love is, in which all true holineſs conſiſteth.

THOUGH it be certain from the holy ſcriptures that all true holineſs conſiſts in love; yet all love is not holineſs. If it were, then all men would be holy, and have a great degree of holineſs; for we all exerciſe much love, even in all our volitions and conduct. But it is ſo far from being true, that all kinds of love, and love to all objects is holineſs, that there is a ſinful love often ſpoken of in ſcripture. Such is the love of them that hate the Lord; (*a*) The love of the world; (*b*) and love of our

(*a*) 2 Chron. xix. 2. (*b*) 1 John. ii 15.

own ſelves. (*a*) There is a kind of love therefore which is in its nature contrary to holineſs. Of this the world has been full in all ages. It is neceſſary therefore that we ſhould carefully inquire into the nature and kind of holy love, in order to find the true and proper diſtinction and difference between that, and the love in which there is no holineſs.

Love has been uſually diſtinguiſhed into love of benevolence or good will; love of complacence or delight; love of eſteem---and love of gratitude. The love of benevolence is good-will to beings capable of good or happineſs, and conſiſts in deſiring and purſuing their good, or rejoicing in their poſſeſſing it. By benevolence is, I

(*a*) 2 Timothy iii. 2.

ſuppoſe, moſt commonly meant, that good-will which is exerciſed towards other beings, in diſtinction from ſelf-love: But good will is as really implied in ſelf-love, as in the love of others; for they who love themſelves only, exerciſe good-will towards themſelves.

COMPLACENCE is that affection of the mind in which we are pleaſed with any object. There is what may be called complacence in Benevolence itſelf, even in all the exerciſes of it; being neceſſarily implied in it. Good-will to any being, ſuppoſes a taſte for good and happineſs, and that we have ſome good in view, with which we are pleaſed. If any one wiſhes well to himſelf only, this is taking delight in ſome good, *as his own*. And wiſh-

ing well to others, implies a taſte and reliſh for the good of others, *as theirs*, and a delight in it, when they are ſeen poſſeſſed of it.

But by the love of complacence, when diſtinguiſhed from benevolence, is, I think, generally meant, the pleaſure and delight we take in the perſon and character of an intelligent being, as beautiful and excellent. In this ſenſe the word will be uſed in this diſcourſe. And, complacence being underſtood in this ſenſe, it may be obſerved, that benevolence and complacence have not always the ſame object. We may exerciſe good-will to a perſon, whoſe whole character is very diſagreeable and diſpleaſing to us; ſo that he may, at the ſame time, be the object of our benevo-

lence and of our diſplicence and aver-ſion; becauſe, though capable of happineſs, his preſent character is diſagreeable and hateful.

THE love of eſteem is nothing diſtinct from benevolence and complacence, exerciſed towards a worthy, excellent object, at leaſt in our apprehenſion. The love of gratitude is that affection which we exerciſe towards another, conſidered as a benefactor, for his good-will exerciſed towards ourſelves, or others. This includes in it both benevolence and complacence, and is nothing diſtinct from this, as might be eaſily ſhewn, were there need of it; and will perhaps be more particularly attended to in the ſequel.

HAVING obſerved theſe things

concerning love in general, it now remains to be ſaid, what that love is in which holineſs conſiſteth. This is love to God and our neighbour, including ourſelves; and is univerſal benevolence, or friendly affection to all intelligent beings. This univerſal benevolence, with all that affection or love which is included in it, and inſeparable from it, is the holy love which the law of God requires, and is the whole of true holineſs. This love is diſtinguiſhed from all other kinds of love, both in its nature, and object. The object is,

1. UNIVERSAL being, including God and all intelligent creatures. Benevolence, or univerſal goodneſs, has for its object all beings which exiſt, capable of good, or

that can be, in any ſenſe and degree, objects of good will. Any kind of good will, or any thing which has the appearance of benevolence, which is limited to particular objects, and will not extend to all towards which good-will can be exerciſed, is not *univerſal* benevolence; but is eſſentially different from it, and quite of another nature. That good will, which will extend only to a limited number, or a certain kind or circle of beings, by the ſuppoſition, is not univerſal good will: It falls, as it were, infinitely ſhort of it, in this reſpect, and is ſo far from uniting its ſubject to univerſal exiſtence, that it is circumſcribed by very narrow bounds, and is conſiſtent with ill will and oppoſition to ge-

neral exiſtence; yea, it is in fact in its own nature ſuch: For it ſets up an infinitely ſmall part of exiſtence, compared with the whole, and regards it above the whole; which has the nature of unfriendly diſregard, and real oppoſition to to the whole. It hence appears to be ſo far from true univerſal benevolence, that it is of an oppoſite nature; as it does *from its nature* oppoſe it. Beſides, it is certain that ſuch limited good-will has nothing of the nature of univerſal goodneſs, but it is ſomething *in its own nature* which thus limits it to a ſmall part of being, in oppoſition to being in general, as there can be no other reaſon of this limitation, but the nature of the affection itſelf: Which could not be, if it

was not *in nature* different from universal benevolence, and contrary to it. (*a*)

But holy love unites the heart to universal exiſtence, ſo far as it comes into veiw, and is the moſt cordial friendſhip to all without exception; and wiſhes and ſeeks the good of every individual, ſo far as this is conſiſtent with the greateſt

(*a*) Mr. Edwards has ſet this in a clear light, in his diſſertation concerning the nature of true virtue, p. 129, 130, 131.

And this veiw of the matter ſhews us in what ſenſe universal exiſtence is the *primary* object of holy benevolence. This is the firſt and moſt eſſential thing in it, in which lies its diſtinction from all love which is not holy. This is the leading, governing thing in it, as that in which its peculiar diſtinguiſhing nature conſiſts. He who exerciſes true benevolence towards any particular being, does it as a friend to the whole; ſo that his love to him is really love to being in general, as he belongs to the whole, and is included in it.

good of being in general; except thoſe who are known implacable enemies to general exiſtence. And theſe are neceſſarily oppoſed by this univerſal benevolence.

2. ANOTHER object of univerſal benevolence is *the higheſt good of the whole*. As ſoon and as far as the eyes of the benevolent perſon are opened to ſee what is the true good of intelligent beings, and higheſt happineſs of the univerſe, this good becomes the object of his wiſhes. And as holineſs itſelf is this true and higheſt good, even holy love and benevolence, by which intelligencies are united together in the moſt beautiful, happy manner, every one to his utmoſt conſpiring to promote the greateſt general good, and enjoying this good:

I ſay, as this is the higheſt good, it becomes the object of his delight, and of his wiſhes; ſo that this is the object of his benevolence, and of his complacence at the ſame time. And in this alſo, holy love is diſtinguiſhed from every other kind of love, as that has not holineſs for its object in any ſenſe or degree, but is conſiſtent with the utmoſt averſion to it. And this holy love differs from all other kinds of love in its *nature*, as well as object. The nature of it may be determined by its object. That affection whoſe object not only differs in nature and kind from the object of other love, but is oppoſite to it, muſt itſelf be of a different and oppoſite nature. But the particular nature of this

love will be more fully explained hereafter.

THIS univerſal benevolence, or love to being in general, muſt have God, who is infinitely the greateſt and moſt excellent, and the ſum of all being and perfection, for its object, and is exerciſed towards him, in loving him with all the heart, with all the ſoul, with all the mind, and with all the ſtrength. This is, I think, well expreſſed by Mr. EDWARDS, in the following words: "The mind being under the ſov-
"ran dominion of *love to God*,
"does, above all things, ſeek the
"glory of God, and make this his
"ſupreme, governing, and ulti-
"mate end; conſiſting in the ex-
"preſſion of God's perfections in
"their proper effects, and in the

"communications of the infinite
"fulneſs of God to the creature;
"in the creature's higheſt eſteem
"of God, love to God, and joy in
"God, and in the proper exerciſes
"and expreſſions of theſe.---And
"as far as ſuch a mind exerciſes
"benevolence to created beings,
"it chiefly ſeeks the good of the
"creature, conſiſting in its know-
"ledge or view of God's glory
"and beauty, its union with God,
"conformity and love to him, and
"joy in him. And that temper or
"diſpoſition of heart, that conſent,
"union, or propenſity of mind to
"being in general, which appears
"chiefly in ſuch exerciſes, is real
"holineſs. And no other affection
"but this is the nature of true
"virtue."

But it will be proper here more particularly to ſhow, that all holy affection conſiſts in this benevolence or goodneſs; and that it can conſiſt in nothing but this, and what is implied in it. This will be evident, if the two following propoſitions can be ſupported.

1. Universal benevolence does imply love of complacence, and all holy love. He who exerciſes univerſal benevolence, does eſteem and take complacency in all, according to their worth and excellence: For not to do ſo, is unkind and injurious; and therefore contrary to the nature of benevolence. And benevolent affection, from the neceſſity of its nature, is pleaſed with this ſame affection in others. Every one muſt be pleaſed with

friendſhip to thoſe whom he himſelf is a friend; for not to be ſo, would be a contradiction.

Benevolent, kind affection neceſſarily implies alſo gratitude to benefactors for kindneſs exerciſed; for this is nothing elſe but being properly affected with the benevolence of others, which has juſt been ſhown to be the nature of benevolence. Beſides, not to exerciſe gratitude towards the benevolent and kind, is itſelf unkind; and therefore contrary to the nature of benevolence. A man muſt be ſtripped of all true benevolence, in order to exclude gratitude: Where the former is, the latter is found to an equal degree.---Thus evident is it, that all holy love is implied in univerſal benevolence; ſo that he

who has this, certainly has the whole. To ſuppoſe a perſon truly benevolent, and not to exerciſe holy love of eſteem, complacence and gratitude, in all ſuitable ways, and towards all proper objects, is a moſt glaring contradiction, and to imagine a character which never did, nor can exiſt.

2 On the contrary, where there is no holy love of benevolence, there can be no holy love of any kind. Since benevolence neceſſarily includes all holy love, in its very nature; where this is not, there cannot be, any holy love.

The love of gratitude ſuppoſes benevolence, and is really an exerciſe of this. Gratitude is certainly an approbation of benevolence, which never takes place in

a mind deſtitute of it. And what is gratitude but an exerciſe of friendly affection towards the benevolent? So certain is it, that where there is no good-will, there is no true gratitude. This is ſo evident at firſt thought, that it is needleſs to enlarge.

But I ſhall be more particular in producing evidence that there can be no holy love of complacence, where there is no benevolence. Holy complacence is the love of holineſs for holineſs ſake; or the approbation of a holy character, for its intrinſic beauty and excellence. That there can be no holy complacence, independent of benevolence, is evident from the following conſiderations:

The mind cannot have any holy

complacence in univerſal goodneſs; while itſelf is wholly deſtitute of it. The mind which is wholly devoid of kind affection, has no true, ſenſible idea of benevolence, and conſequently can have no delight in it. Delight or complacence is a *ſenſation* of the mind, which cannot be exerciſed towards that object of which it has no true ſenſe; but the mind which has no benevolence, has no ſenſation of it; for ſuch a ſenſation implies benevolence; and therefore can have no complacence in it. As the love of holineſs, is an exerciſe of holineſs; ſo the love of holy benevolence, implies the exerciſe of benevolence. Therefore he who hath no benevolence, hath no complacence in it. ---But that affection of the mind

which is not the love of *all* holineſs, in whatever it may conſiſt, is not a true holy complacence; but ſomething of a different nature. Therefore there can be no holy complacence in holineſs, without the exerciſe of benevolence: Conſequently where there is no benevolence, there is no holy exerciſe of mind.

But this will be more evident, if poſſible, by conſidering the love of complacence, as exerciſed towards God. It will appear, on due conſideration, that the perſon who has no univerſal benevolence, does not heartily approve of the benevolence of God; and therefore does not delight in God's holineſs or moral character, ſo far as it conſiſts in be-

nevolence.---But he who is not a friend to the holy benevolence of God, is certainly not a friend to holineſs in general, and ſo has no complacency in any true holineſs. Yea, he who has no benevolence in his heart, is an enemy to benevolence: For the heart of man is in no ſuch inſtance indifferent, neither friendly, nor oppoſed to any thing in God's moral character; is never in ſuch a ſtate, as neither to approve nor diſapprove. Therefore ſuch an one is an enemy to univerſal benevolence in God: Whence it follows that he has no true love to God's moral character. For he who is diſpleaſed with any thing in the moral character of God, is certainly diſpleaſed with the whole, as the holineſs of God is

not inconſiſtent with itſelf; but is one moſt ſimple thing.

THE holineſs of God, which is expreſſed in his law, and in the goſpel (for the ſame character, and the ſame holineſs is expreſſed in both) conſiſts, in a great meaſure at leaſt, in ſuch ſupreme regard to himſelf, and the higheſt happineſs and glory of his kingdom, that he holds every one who oppoſes him and his kingdom, or has the leaſt diſreſpect, or even indifference towards him and his glory, juſtly expoſed to eternal damnation; and is diſpoſed to inflict it on all ſuch who cannot be delivered from it, conſiſtent with his own higheſt honor, and the greateſt good of the whole.

Now it is in the nature of things impoſſible, that he who has no re-

gard to God and his glory, and no univerſal good-will, ſhould in the leaſt approve of ſuch a character. Yea, he muſt be at enmity with it, as there is no medium. He who is not for it, is againſt it. (*a*)

THIS will appear ſtill more glaring, by obſerving, what will be more particularly conſidered hereafter, that the holy love of God, which is moſt celebrated in the divine oracles, as worthy of our love and imitation, is the love of benevolence, which God exerciſes and manifeſts towards fallen man, who has become his enemy. This is certainly a love, not of complacence, but of benevolence, as all

(*a*) The mind thus eſtranged from univerſal Good will is "The carnal mind, which is enmity againſt God." Rom. viii. 7.

love to enemies muſt be. Now he who has not that benevolence which diſpoſes him to love his enemies, will not be pleaſed with this love of God; but diſpleaſed. He who has no love to his enemies, but cheriſhes the contrary affection, will not be pleaſed with that good-will which is equally extended to his enemies, and to himſelf; but ſuch love muſt be the object of his averſion.

Thus evident is it, that they who have no benevolence, do not approve of God's holineſs or moral character, revealed in his word; ſince univerſal benevolence muſt be the object, not of their delight, but of their averſion: And conſequently, that the holy love of complacence cannot exiſt inde-

pendent of benevolence; which was the point to be proved.

But if any reader ſhould not ſee the concluſiveneſs of theſe arguments, he is deſired to reflect on his own ſenſe of this matter, whether he does not always ſo include benevolence in his idea of a good character; that to exclude it, will utterly ſpoil the whole; I doubt not this is the common ſenſe of all men; and nothing is looked upon as a more certain evidence, that a man has no holineſs, than that conduct which diſcovers he has no kind affection, but is unmerciful and cruel.

SECTION IV.

Wherein ſelf-love is ſhewn to be no part of that love in which holineſs conſiſts; but of a nature quite different and oppoſite.

SELF-LOVE has been repreſented by many, not only as a branch of holineſs; but that in which it radically conſiſts, making it the ſpring of all our actions. Some have thought it not only no part of holineſs, but oppoſed to it. Others have taken a medium between theſe two, and repreſented ſelf-love to be in its nature innocent and good; but not holy love, unleſs love to God and our neighbour be joined with it, to regulate

and govern it.---In order to determine which of theſe opinions is right, we muſt underſtand what is intended by ſelf-love. By this very different things are meant, by different, and often by the ſame perſons. There are three things eſpecially, often called by that name, and their not being diſtinguiſhed, has occaſioned great confuſion and error in treating this ſubject.

Firſt. A general appetite to good, and averſion to evil, conſidered merely as ſuch, or a perception of pain or pleaſure, is called ſelf-love. This is eſſential to all moral agents, being implied in every act of will. If nothing were good or evil to us, we could have no choice or power of will, more than a tree or rock; for by the ſuppoſition,

we ſhould be perfectly indifferent to every thing. We could neither love nor hate, chooſe nor refuſe. This general appetite is therefore common to all moral agents, holy and ſinful, and is eſſential to every act, both of ſin and holineſs. It is properly a natural capacity; as much ſo as the faculty of underſtanding, or power of will; and is the very ſame thing, indeed, with the latter, or at leaſt implied in it. It is therefore, in itſelf, neither ſinful nor holy; but a foundation or capacity for either. Should this ceaſe in angels and devils, they would no longer be holy or ſinful.

Secondly. By ſelf-love is ſometimes meant *ſelfiſhneſs*, or thoſe exerciſes in which a perſon love

himſelf only, which wholly confine him to his own perſonal intereſt; he taking no pleaſure in any thing elſe, but placing all his good and happineſs here. This is moſt properly called ſelf-love; as it is a man's love of his own ſelf, *as ſelf*, and of nothing elſe; and therefore is oppoſed to the love of others, or univerſal benevolence. This is wholly an intereſted, ſelfiſh affection, by which a perſon ſets up himſelf as ſupreme, and the only object of regard; and nothing is good or lovely in his view, unleſs it coincide with his ſelfiſhneſs, and be ſuited to promote his own private intereſt: All other beings are by him ſubordinated to himſelf, and loved for his own ſake only; and ſo far as they oppoſe, or do not ſerve

this contracted, partial intereſt, in which he places all his good and happineſs, are either hated, or totally diſregarded.---In a word, the diſpoſition and language of his heart is, "There is nothing in the "whole univerſe of any worth to "me, but my own ſelf; if I may "be happy, it is enough." There is no need of any laboured proof to ſhew that ſuch exerciſes of heart are, in their nature, oppoſition to univerſal good-will: This appears at firſt view. Therefore, if the latter has any thing of the nature of holineſs, the former muſt ſtand directly oppoſed to it.

Thirdly. By ſelf-love may be underſtood the love a perſon has for himſelf as part of the whole, which is implied in univerſal benevolence.

He who loves the whole, loves every part of the whole; therefore muſt love himſelf, and ſeek his own happineſs, as he is included in general being. It is a contradiction to ſuppoſe that a perſon has univerſal good-will, and yet has no regard to himſelf. This love of ourſelves is therefore neceſſarily implied in that univerſal benevolence, which is oppoſed to the ſelfiſhneſs deſcribed above. That is altogether ſelfiſh, conſiſting in a man's loving himſelf, *as ſelf*, or merely becauſe he is himſelf, but this love of himſelf, of which I am now ſpeaking, is not love of ſelf, *as ſelf*, but is implied in the general object of love; and therefore is no other than love to being in general, or univerſal benevolence. It is the ſame kind of

affection with which he loves his neighbour; in loving his neighbour, he loves himſelf alſo, becauſe he cannot love his neighbour as part of the whole, and not love himſelf alſo as ſuch; his own happineſs, as an individual, being worth as much in itſelf, and to the whole, as that of his neighbour, and as much included in the general good, ſince it equally conduces to the happineſs of the whole.

And it may be further obſerved, that this love, in which a man regards himſelf as part of the whole, and his intereſt and happineſs, for the ſame reaſon he regards that of his neighbour, may be exerciſed with greater ſtrength, and more ſenſibly, with reſpect to his own

intereſt and welfare, than towards that of his neighbour, who is as worthy of regard as himſelf; and yet there be nothing ſelfiſh in his affection, but it may be wholly of the nature of general benevolence. ---And that for two reaſons---

1. He has a more clear, full and conſtant view of himſelf and his intereſt, than he can have of his neighbour's; therefore he muſt be more affected with the former, and it will be more the object of his concern, than the latter. As man is not omniſcient, and his mind cannot comprehend univerſal being; but is limited in his views and exerciſes, he muſt be moſt affected with thoſe objects which are moſt in his view. This is right, and his duty: And not to be thus

affected is inconſiſtent with general benevolence.

2. Every perſon has a more particular and immediate care of himſelf committed to him by God, than of his neighbour. As he is under greater advantages to know his own ſtate and circumſtances, wants and enjoyments, and promote his own intereſt, in general, than another can be; ſo this concern is more eſpecially committed to him; which is a further reaſon why he ſhould pay a greater regard to it, than to that of his neighbour, though in itſelf as great and important as his own. This is not ſelfiſhneſs; but the genuine exerciſe of diſintereſted benevolence.

Thus a man who has a benevolent regard for a whole community

or kingdom, and is equally a friend to every part and each perſon of that community, and equally exerts himſelf for the welfare of each, ſo far they come under his notice; when he is fixed in a particular town, and thereby obtains a clearer knowledge of their circumſtances, both good and evil, and of the beſt means to promote their greateſt happineſs, he will neceſſarily turn his attention to them more conſtantly and in a greater degree, and be more ſenſibly affected with their miſeries and enjoyments, than with thoſe of the neighbouring towns. And of the inhabitants of this town, they whoſe circumſtances and intereſt are moſt in his view; and who by their particular ſituation and connexion, are

moſt under his care, will have the firſt and greateſt ſhare of his attention and benevolent regards. This is no evidence, that he is ſelfiſh; it is the natural, genuine exerciſe of general benevolence.

This view may ſerve to ſhow us one reaſon why, in many caſes, it is difficult to diſtinguiſh that ſelf-love which conſiſts in ſelfiſhneſs, from the benevolence which is its contrary; and why theſe are often confounded, and taken for the ſame thing. That ſelf-love which conſiſts in ſelfiſhneſs, has ſelf for its firſt and ſupreme object, and is extended to others, only as they are viewed as more or leſs favourable to the intereſt of ſelf, as ſuch.

Thus ſelfiſhneſs may extend to a whole community, and each indi-

vidual member of it; becauſe the ſelfiſh man conſiders their welfare as connected with his own. And as his welfare is commonly in a higher degree, and more ſenſibly connected with the welfare of thoſe who are neareſt to him, eſpecially thoſe who love him; he will have a greater regard ſtill for them and their welfare, purely from ſelfiſhneſs, or for his own ſake. And ſince his near relations, his own family and children, are, in a ſenſe, a part of himſelf; and his intereſt and happineſs is in a peculiar manner dependent on their's, his ſelfiſh regards will be more particularly extended to them. In this reſpect there is in ſelfiſhneſs a reſemblance to what is found in benevolence; which, though it conſiſt in diſin-

tereſted good-will to the whole, is, as obſerved above, nevertheleſs exerciſed by the benevolent perſon to individuals; and more ſtrongly to thoſe who are more nearly connected with him, and more particularly to himſelf.

THERE is, however, a great difference, and oppoſition in theſe two kinds of affection; which appears from what has been already ſaid. This ſelfiſh affection, though extended to the whole community with which the ſelfiſh man is connected, is at bottom nothing but love to himſelf. This is the foundation and center of his love. He in reality loves nothing but himſelf, and regards others wholly for his own ſake. Therefore, when he conſiders their welfare as inconſiſt-

ent with his own; or any way oppoſing or impeding his intereſt, his heart will turn againſt them, and hate them, whatever be their connexion or relation. On the other hand, the regard to a man's own intereſt, which is included in general good-will, is not love of himſelf as ſuch: There is nothing contracted and ſelfiſh in this affection, which is founded on his good-will to the whole.

This brings into view another thing, in which theſe two ſorts of love of ſelf differ, and oppoſe each other. He whoſe regard to himſelf and his own intereſt does not ariſe from ſelfiſhneſs, but general benevolence, is ready to give up his own perſonal good, for the ſake of the whole: He deſires no good

for himſelf, unleſs conſiſtent with the common good. Whatever ſuppoſed good of his own, or of another, interferes with the greateſt general good, is no good to him, but the object of his averſion, in this view of it. So that all his own particular intereſt is ſubordinate to that of the whole. This is neceſſary, when regard to ourſelves is but a branch of general good-will. Thus the intereſt of the benevolent man is the common intereſt, and he has no other. In a word, he ſubjects and devotes himſelf, and all things, to the glory of God, and the happineſs and glory of his church and kingdom; which is the greateſt univerſal good, and includes the higheſt good of the creature; he having no other intereſt but this.

But that ſelf-love which conſiſts in ſelfiſhneſs, is, in this reſpect, moſt oppoſite to this. So far as the heart is governed by this, it does not, it cannot give up its own private good, for the ſake of the greateſt public good; ſince, by the ſuppoſition, he knows no good but the former, and every thing is by him ſubordinated to that.---But enough has been ſaid to ſhew the difference and oppoſition there is between ſelfiſhneſs, and that regard and concern a benevolent perſon has for his own intereſt, as a part of the whole, which is neceſſarily implied in general benevolence.

It has been ſaid, though *inordinate* ſelf-love be ſinful, it is not ſo in itſelf; but when joined with love to God and our neighbour, and

ſubordinate to the general good, it is a virtuous, holy affection: And to confirm this, the divine command has been alledged, "Thou "ſhalt love thy neighbour, *as thy-* "*ſelf*," Here, it is ſaid, we are commanded to love ourſelves, as much as our neighbour. Self-love is therefore not a ſin, but a duty, ſo long as it does not exceed due bounds.

Upon this the following things may be obſerved:

1. It is utterly unaccountable, and carries in it a direct contradiction, that the ſame affection, when exerciſed in a certain limited degree, ſhould be holineſs; but when exerciſed in a higher and ſtronger degree, ſhould not only have leſs holineſs, but change its nature, and

become ſin. This none will aſſert, after due attention: Yet this is aſſerted in the propoſition under conſideration. However ſelf-love may be reſtrained, it is ſtill ſelf-love, and of the ſame nature with that which is under no reſtraint; and therefore as oppoſite to holineſs, though not to ſo great a degree, and the bad effects of it may not be ſo great, or ſo manifeſt. A devouring beaſt of prey, when confined in a cage, may not be ſo miſchievous, or appear ſo dreadful, as when let looſe, and deſtroying all before him: But his nature is not changed by his confinement; he is ſtill, in his nature, not a harmleſs creature, but a beaſt of prey.

2. This ſelf-love cannot be ſubordinate to the good of the whole;

it is contrary to the very nature of it, and implies a contradiction. It ſeeks to advance ſelf only, and ſubordinates every thing to this; and therefore will not conſent that ſelf ſhould be ſubordinated to any thing elſe, or have any rival. Whenever it conſents to this, it is no longer ſelf-love, but generous, diſintereſted affection; as contrary to ſelfiſhneſs, as mercy is to injuſtice and cruelty. Such a conſent and change is, however, impoſſible, being a contradiction. This affection muſt be rooted out, or counteracted; and a directly oppoſite affection muſt take place, in order to a perſon's ſubordinating his own perſonal intereſt to any other intereſt whatſoever.

THEREFORE, if they who ſpeak

of ſelf-love, ſo regulated as to be ſubordinate to a proper regard to others, and to the general good, mean any thing which is conſiſtent, and agreeable to the truth, they muſt intend that regard to ourſelves, which is not ſelf-love, but real benevolence to the whole, and reſpects ourſelves as part of the whole only. This regard to ourſelves, as has been ſhown, is always, of neceſſity, ſubordinate to the good of the whole.

3. SELF-LOVE is ſo far from being enjoined or approved in the command, "Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thy ſelf," that it is utterly forbidden. Self-love is wholly a partial affection, giving all to ourſelves, and nothing to our neigh-

bour, and is therefore oppoſed to love to him; eſpecially to loving him as ourſelves.

Nothing but univerſal benevolence can be obedience to this command; and ſo far as this takes place it is obeyed, and ſelf-love is oppoſed and mortified. This benevolence, as has been ſhown, implies a proper regard to ourſelves, and an equal regard to our neighbour; having all that impartiality, and love to our neighbour and ourſelves, which this law requires.--- And, by the way, this is a clear evidence that univerſal benevolence, with the affection implied in it, is that in which all holineſs conſiſts, ſince no other kind of love is obedience to this command; but he who has this, does of ne-

ceſſity love his neighbour as himſelf.

On the whole, it appears that three different kinds of affection have been called ſelf-love. The firſt is neither ſin nor holineſs, but is equally implied in both. The two laſt are directly oppoſite to each other; the latter being geneneral, diſintereſted benevolence, extended to ourſelves as included in the whole; and is the ſame holy love which has God and our neighbour for its object. The other is contracted ſelfiſhneſs, by which ſelf only is regarded, and exalted above God and our neighbour, and in oppoſition to the general good; and is, in every degree of it, ſinful.--- This ſelfiſhneſs is properly called ſelf-love; and in this ſenſe the

word will be uſed in the following inquiry.

THAT univerſal benevolence is the whole of holineſs; and, on the other hand, all ſin conſiſts in ſelf-love, will more fully appear by the following conſideration of each, in its exerciſes and fruits.

UNIVERSAL good will comprehends all the love to God, our neighbour, and ourſelves, required in the law of God; and therefore muſt be the whole of holy obedience.---Every pious ſentiment and affection is compriſed in this; and all piety in words and practice is but an expreſſion of this love: Where this love is not, all outward expreſſions of piety, in words and actions, are emptineſs and hypocriſy. Let any ſerious perſon think

what are the particular branches of true piety: Let him view each one by itſelf; and when he has diſcovered the nature and eſſence of it, he will find that diſintereſted, friendly affection is its diſtinguiſhing characteriſtic. For inſtance, let fear and reverence of the divine majeſty be conſidered in this view. What but love and friendly affection diſtinguiſhes this from the fear and dread of devils? All the holineſs in pious fear, by which it is diſtinguiſhed from the fear of the wicked, conſiſts in love. Leave all diſintereſted, friendly affection to the divine being out of fear, and all holineſs is excluded.---

Again, if we conſider what is contained in true gratitude to God, we ſhall find diſintereſted, kind af-

fection, the only thing wherein it differs from the affection of the moſt wicked creature. Where there is no good-will, there is nothing in what is called gratitude, better than that which the legion of devils exerciſed, when they were ſo far gratified by Chriſt, as to be ſuffered to deſtroy the herd of ſwine. But ſo far as good-will is exerciſed, the goodneſs of God to us and others, will excite holy gratitude; which is nothing elſe but good-will to God and our neighbour, in which we ourſelves are included, and correſpondent affection, excited and acted out in the view of the good-will and kindneſs of God.

And univerſal good-will implies the whole of that affection and du-

ty we owe to our neighbour. It all conſiſts in the exerciſe and expreſſion of this, and thoſe affections that are implied in it. The exerciſe and practice of righteouſneſs or juſtice towards our neighbour, implies a benevolent regard to him and his intereſt. Where this is not, there is no exerciſe and practice of juſtice in the heart, whatever is the external conduct; for juſtice conſiſts in doing to our neighbour, as we would he ſhould do to us; or in other words, loving our neighbour as ourſelves. And where this benevolent regard to our neighbour is, there is juſtice; for this love worketh no ill to our neighbour.---And as righteouſneſs, truth and faithfulneſs are implied in univerſal benevolence,

ſo are temperance and chaſtity, or ſobriety in the proper reſtraint and government of our own appetites and paſſions: For it is eaſy to ſee that the undue indulgence of theſe, is contrary to benevolence, as tending to hurt others, or ourſelves, or both; and ſo is oppoſite to the general good, and the divine command, in which all the crime of ſuch indulgence conſiſts. In ſhort, there is not any one virtue, or branch of godlineſs, humanity or ſobriety; nor any duty we owe to God, our neighbour, or ourſelves, that is not comprehended in univerſal benevolence; and is not neceſſarily exerciſed and practiſed, ſo far as this affection takes place in the heart: And where there is no defect in the latter, the former are

found in their fulneſs and perfection: For the whole is nothing but benevolence acted out in its proper nature, and perfection; or love to God and our neighbour made perfect in all its genuine exerciſes and expreſſions.

On the contrary, all ſin conſiſts in ſelf-love, and what is implied in this.

Self-love is, in its whole nature, and in every degree of it, enmity againſt God. It is not ſubject to the law of God, nor indeed can be; and is the only affection that can oppoſe it. It cannot be reconciled to any of God's conduct, rightly underſtood; but is in its very nature rebellion againſt it; which is all an expreſſion of that love which is moſt contrary to ſelf-love.

This is therefore the fruitful ſource of every exerciſe and act of impiety and rebellion againſt God, and contempt of him, that ever was, or can be.---Self-love exerciſed and indulged, blinds the heart to every true moral excellence and beauty. This does not ſuit the taſte of the ſelfiſh heart, but gives it diſguſt. Self-love is the foundation and reaſon of all that blindneſs to ſpiritual things, to God, his glorious character, works and kingdom, which the ſcripture repreſents wicked men to have; and is therefore the ſource of all the errors which men imbibe, as well as all the open idolatry in the heathen world, and falſe religion under the light of the goſpel. All this is agreeable to that ſelf-love which

oppoſes God's true character; and under the influence of this, men go off from the truth, and believe, love and practiſe a lie; it being itſelf the greateſt practical lie in nature, as it ſets up that which is comparatively nothing, above univerſal exiſtence. Self-love is the ſource of all the profaneneſs and impiety in the world; and of all the pride and ambition among men; which is nothing but ſelfiſhneſs acted out in this particular way. This is at the bottom of all the worldlineſs and ſenſuality into which men run; as it blinds their eyes to all true good, contracts their hearts, and ſinks them down, ſo that they look upon worldly enjoyments to be the greateſt good, and that in which their true intereſt lies. This

is the ſpring of all the hatred and ill-will, ſtrife and contention among men; for this leads men to hate and oppoſe all thoſe whom they view in the way of their own ſelfiſh intereſt. This is the ſource of all falſehood, injuſtice and oppreſſion under the ſun; in which men are, through their ſelfiſhneſs, ſeeking, by undue methods, to invade the right and property of others. Self-love produces all the violent paſſions, envy, wrath, clamour and evil ſpeaking, of which men are guilty. Take away ſelfiſhneſs, and all theſe would ceaſe immediately. And if there be any other ſin, any thing which is contrary to the divine law, it is briefly comprehended in this fruitful ſource of all iniquity, SELF-LOVE.

And hence we may ſee that holy love is wholly a *diſintereſted* affection, and in what ſenſe it is ſo. Self-love is wholly an intereſted affection, as ſelf is the only object of it. Holy love has no regard to ſelf, as ſelf; but is a regard to the greateſt general good and intereſt; the glory of God in the higheſt glory of his kingdom, and the greateſt good of the creation. So far as a man exerciſes holy love, he has no other intereſt but this; as all is devoted to this, and given up for the ſake of it. And in this ſenſe all his love is diſintereſted, as it ſeeks not any ſelf intereſt, but the contrary. He who exerciſes this diſintereſted love, has pleaſure indeed, and is purſuing an intereſt and happineſs; though it be not a ſelfiſh intereſt, but that in the pur-

ſuit of which he renounces what ſelf-love ſeeks.

A JUDGE is ſaid to be intereſted in a cauſe he is to decide, ſo far as his own perſonal intereſt is concerned in it, and his ſelf-love will influence him to take one ſide, rather than the other, which renders him unfit to judge the cauſe. But if his own perſonal intereſt be not concerned in the caſe, and there be nothing to bias him to one ſide rather than the other, he is ſaid to be diſintereſted. And though he may be bribed, or ſome way intereſted in the matter; yet if he is not at all influenced by this, and decides the cauſe contrary to the dictates of ſelf-love, he is ſaid to act diſintereſtedly. In ſuch a ſenſe as this, all holy affection is diſintereſted. Such a judge, when he renounces all ſelfiſh

conſiderations, and eſpouſes the cauſe of the widow and fatherleſs, and delivers them from the hand of oppreſſors, has an intereſt which he ſeeks; but not an intereſt, which ſelfiſhneſs prompts him to purſue: And the more he intereſts himſelf in the cauſe of the poor, helpleſs widow, and the greater pleaſure he takes in helping her, the more diſintereſted are his exertions and conduct, and the more is ſelf-love counteracted and mortified.

So, he who, in the exerciſe of holy love, purſues the glory of God, and the higheſt intereſt and happineſs of his kingdom, which includes the greateſt good of his fellow creatures; purſues the beſt, the moſt important intereſt, and has the moſt noble, refined pleaſure in the exerciſe

of this affection; yet in all this he is wholly diſintereſted, as he oppoſes ſelfiſhneſs, and all regard to ſelf, which is not implied in being thus devoted to the greateſt general good, and forſakes the whole intereſt which ſelf-love ſeeks, for the ſake of the kingdom of God.

SECTION V.

In which the foregoing account of ſin and holineſs is ſhown to be agreeable to reaſon.

I. IT is moſt reaſonable that the common and greateſt good of the whole ſhould be ſought by every particular member of it: That every one ſhould be ſo devoted to the good of the whole, as to give up the leſs good of individuals, and conſequently his own perſonal inter-

eſt whenever inconſiſtent herewith. Thus, it is highly reaſonable that a particular member of a community ſhould cheerfully give up all his perſonal intereſt, his whole eſtate, and even his life, when this is evidently neceſſary to ſave the whole nation from ruin. If a city is on fire, and in order to ſtop its progreſs, and ſave the city, it is neceſſary that the houſe of a particular perſon ſhould be totally demoliſhed; he ſhould with pleaſure give up his houſe to be deſtroyed, however magnificent and coſtly, and though it contain all he has in the world. If in this caſe a man ſhould heſitate a moment, and be inclined to ſave his own houſe, to the utter deſtruction of the whole city; every one would condemn him as acting a moſt unreaſonable, ſordid

part. But if he be ſuch a friend to the city, and intereſts himſelf ſo much in its welfare, as to take more pleaſure in ſaving it, even at the expence of all he has in the world, than a ſelfiſh man can have in whatever he poſſeſes, he will be applauded, as one of an excellent ſpirit. And every one muſt grant he ought to be imitated by all. And it is reaſonable that every one of the ſociety ſhould be regarded by the reſt, according to his importance and worth; his diſpoſition and ability to promote the greateſt good of the whole community.

But this is univerſal, diſintereſted benevolence. Nothing but this will form men to ſuch exerciſes and conduct. But where this benevolence reigns in every heart, each one will

be thus a friend to all. He who has this benevolence, will, by it, be united to the grand community of the univerſe, including all exiſtence, and be devoted to the good of the whole: And as this is compriſed in the glory of God, and the perfection and happineſs of his kingdom, this will be the object of his affection, and he will ſubordinate all to this; and in ſo doing will act a moſt reaſonable part.

On the other hand, nothing can be more unreaſonable than that every individual ſhould be altogether ſelfiſh, and ſeek his own perſonal intereſt only; not caring what becomes of the community, or any belonging to it, further than his ſelfiſhneſs prompts him to it; being ready at any time to ſacrifice the public, and the greateſt good of every individual to his own

private advantage, however important and worthy he is, and whatever obligation he is under to him.

THIS carries in it every thing mean, miſchievous and perverſe. But *this* is ſelf-love. This is the nature and tendency of every degree of it, though it may be many ways under reſtraints, and often put on the appearance of benevolence and friendſhip.

II. This univerſal benevolence alone, can produce the ſtrong, happy union of intelligences, which reaſon teaches muſt be the attendant of holineſs. It fixes each in his proper place, and effects the higheſt and moſt beautiful harmony conceivable.

III. REASON teaches that univerſal benevolence is the higheſt good of intelligences. This makes every

one a wiſe, hearty friend to all the reſt, and devotes him to the public good: By which the higheſt common good has the greateſt poſſible ſecurity, and is advanced to the utmoſt. Should a king and his ſubjects be thus united in the moſt perfect friendſhip to each other, and entirely devoted to the higheſt general good; each one knowing wherein it conſiſts: And the community having wiſdom to contrive, and power to execute the beſt means to effect it; there would be no evil in this kingdom, but what is neceſſary to promote the general good; which would be advanced to the higheſt degree; and it muſt be, in this reſpect, the moſt happy community imaginable.

And this raiſes the happineſs of

each individual to the higheſt pitch his capacity will admit. For his univerſal benevolence will neceſſarily put him in poſſeſſion of the good of the whole, and of every particular, ſo far as he perceives it, and in proportion to the degree of his benevolence. By his diſintereſted good will, this is become his good; or he enjoys it as much as if it were his own perſonal good; whereby he has immenſely more happineſs than in any other poſſible way: And, in proportion to his good will to the whole, he takes pleaſure in others who are friends to the ſame; and muſt be filled with a peculiar ſatiſfaction and delight, while he ſees all around him, not only delighting in himſelf, as a friend to the whole, but devoted to the general good.

THIS may be applied to the grand community, THE KINGDOM OF GOD; which comprehends GOD, the ſupreme king, and all who are voluntarily united in ſubjection to him. The reaſon of man cannot invent any way to ſecure and promote the happineſs of this community, unleſs univerſal benevolence be introduced. And no other kind of virtue is neceſſary to the higheſt conceivable good of the whole, and every individual.*

BUT ſelf-love, when it has its genuine, unreſtrained influence, deſtroys all public good. This is the mother of all the luſts which bring evil into the univerſe. It prevents indi-

* This might be more particularly illuſtrated; but is left to the pleaſing contemplation of the benevolent friends of Chriſt and his kingdom.

viduals enjoying the good of others; and indeed blinds them to all true happineſs. It contracts the mind, and degrades it below the proper purſuits of a rational creature, and entails miſery on its unhappy ſubject, and votary.

IV. THE natural world, we know, was created for the moral; and it is generally granted that the former is an emblem of the latter. We may hence expect to find *that* in the former, which bears a conſpicuous analogy to holineſs, the perfection and glory of the intellectual ſyſtem: And this muſt be the general law of attraction, the common bond of union in our material ſyſtem; by which all bodies are mutually attracted, and tend to one center: Every part, while it attracts, being alſo attracta-

ed by the whole, is fixed in its ſtation, and extends its influence to all; ſo that each particle has, in a ſenſe, a regard to the whole, and contributes to the general good. This is the ſource of the order and beauty ſo obvious in our world. The ſun, the center of all, ſpreads his kind influence over the whole; and each inferior body, at the ſame time it pays a due regard to all other bodies, pays him a ſupreme regard. This is one moſt ſimple affection, univerſal attraction: A moſt clear, ſtriking reſemblance of univerſal benevolence in the moral world, in which all its union and glory conſiſt.

Further, the repulſive quality found in ſome bodies, by which they reſiſt others, and which, ſhould it univerſally obtain, without control,

would iſſue in the deſtruction of the material world, is an apt repreſentation of ſelf-love

THUS reaſon, nature, and, I may add, general experience, join to point out univerſal benevolence as the ſum of all holineſs.---Hence almoſt all writers on morality have made virtue to conſiſt chiefly, if not altogether, in what they call univerſal benevolence; though many of them have left GOD and his kingdom, the great object of true benevolence, out of their ſyſtem: Nor have they diſtinguiſhed properly between benevolence and ſelf-love.

SECTION VI.

In which is ſhown that holineſs, as taught in divine revelation, conſiſts in univerſal benevolence, agreeable to the foregoing account.

THE holy ſcripture is the beſt and only ſure guide in determining the queſtion before us; which has therefore been kept in view in what has been already ſaid: But we ſhall now conſult it more particularly.

I. THE revealed law of God teaches what true holineſs is. This is not only the ſtandard of all moral excellence and perfection. It is not only the ſtandard of all holineſs in the creature; but is a tranſcript of the moral perfection of GOD. Nothing more is neceſſary then, in order to know what holineſs is, in GOD and the creature, but to underſtand this law.

Our Saviour has taught us, as has been before obſerved, that all the law requires is love; Conſequently holineſs muſt conſiſt wholly in love. We have conſidered what kind of love this muſt be; and arguments have been offered to prove it conſiſts in univerſal, diſintereſted benevolence: At the ſame time, what is meant by this, has been explained.

Our preſent inquiry is, whether this be the love required in the divine law? The anſwer is not difficult to him who will attend.

The law does not require ſelf-love; but love to God, and our neighbour; not from ſelfiſh motives, which is nothing but ſelf-love extended to them, meerly becauſe of our connexion with them, or the benefit we have received, or hope to

receive from them, or becauſe they love us. Our ſaviour tells us this is not holineſs, but conſiſtent with being wholly ſinful. 'For if ye love them which love you, what reward have you? Do not even the Publicans the ſame?'*

Let any one conſult his own ſenſe, whether he accepts that as true reſpect and love from any one, which appears to be wholly ſelfiſh; being nothing but a regard to the benefit to himſelf which he hopes to receive from him. He will at once feel that this has nothing of the nature of true love; but is a mean, ſordid affection, which he cannot but deſpiſe. And this is the ſenſe of all mankind, in their own caſe; however they may put off their Maker with ſuch

* Matt. v. 46.

ſelfiſh affection, and think he will accept it at their hands, as true love and holineſs. Thus the degenerate prieſts in Iſrael offered that to God, which would affront their governor, had they offered it to him; nor would they accept it from their neighbour.*

The love to our neighbour, which the law of God requires, is certainly univerſal, diſintereſted good will, ſince it is a love which will diſpoſe us to do good unto *all men*, and muſt extend to our greateſt enemies: For no love but this will do ſo. Therefore when Chriſt himſelf gave an inſtance of this love, he produced one in which there is nothing but the moſt diſintereſted goodneſs; benevolence towards an enemy in diſ-

*Mal. 1. 8.

treſs.* This we are ſure he would not have done, if this were not the very love required in the command. And he expreſsly declares that the command does not mean a love to our neighbour, as diſtinguiſhed from our enemy, as it was then underſtood by the Jews; but love to enemies, which wiſhes them well, and will lead us to do them good, however injuriouſly they treat us.§

And is it not very unreaſonable to ſuppoſe, that the ſecond command, which our Lord ſays is like unto the firſt, requires ſomething of a different kind, though it be called by the ſame name, *love?* There can be no difference but what ariſes from the very different objects of this ſame love.

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*Luk. x. 25,——37. § Mat. v. 43 44.

St. John teaches us that love to God, and to our brother or neighbour, is inſeparable; that he who loves one of theſe, certainly and neceſſarily loves the other; which could not be, if love to God was different in kind from love to our neighbour. 'If any man ſay, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar. Whoſo hath this world's good, and ſeeth his brother have need, and ſhutteth up his bowels of compaſſion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?'* It is to be obſerved, that the love to our brother, here ſpoken of, is the love of good will, expreſſed in ſhowing kindneſs to him; and indeed the apoſtle ſpeaks of no other kind of love in this epiſtle, as every inſtance of

* 1 Joh. iii. 17. iv. 20.

love which he mentions, is love of benevolence. Now, if love to God is not diſintereſted good will, how can this imply good will to our brother, or lead to it, ſo as to form an infallible connexion?

It has been ſaid, that he who loves God, is hence led to love his neighbour, in obedience to God's command, and from his example, who is good to all; and not becauſe love to God, and kind affection to our neighbour, is the ſame kind of love. To this it may be anſwered,

1. That love to God, which is not diſintereſted good will, nor implies it, is no principle of obedience to the divine command, and can have no tendency to it. No love will diſpoſe men to obey God, but the love of "good will;"

or the love by which they are true friends of God. He who does not obey God from this motive, does not obey him at all: He is influenced only by fear, which none will ſay is true obedience. Therefore they who aſſert we are led to love our neigbour, purely becauſe God commands it, and from love to him, if they attend to their own ideas, will find they ſuppoſe this to be love of good will, which is the very thing they are attempting to oppoſe; and ſo contradict themſelves in the ſuppoſition they make, and really grant all we aſſert.

2. If love to God, which implies no good will to him, could induce to obedience in any inſtance, it would not diſpoſe him to obey this command, and exerciſe good will

to his neigbour, and ſuch command will not in the leaſt influence him to it. If his inducement to love his neighbour be wholly from ſelfiſh principles, which is always the caſe, where there is no diſintereſted good will, it is, by the ſuppoſition, not love of his neighbour, but of himſelf only; and is ſo far from obedience to the divine command, that it is rebellion againſt it.

3 God's univerſal, diſintereſted good will cannot be a motive to love our neighbour, with the ſame good will, any further than we are pleaſed with it; for we are never diſpoſed to imitate what we diſlike. But to be pleaſed with this goodneſs of God, ſuppoſes our hearts to be in the exerciſe of the ſame for benevolence is implied

in taking pleaſure in benevolence, as has been ſhown. This therefore ſuppoſes that good will is implied in that love to God, which leads us to the love of good will to our neighbour; ſo ſuppoſes the very thing it is adduced to oppoſe.

Thus impoſſible is it to account for that inſeparable connexion of love to God, with good will to our neighbour, which the ſcripture aſſerts, unleſs this love, in theſe two branches of it, is the ſame in kind. But if love to God be in its nature, univerſal, diſintereſted good will, the ſcripture repreſentation appears conſiſtent and intelligible.

Thus it appears that the love required in the law of God is univerſal, diſintereſted goodneſs in all its branches, attendants and fruits:

Therefore this is holineſs. But it muſt be further obſerved,

God in giving ſuch a law, requiring ſuch love, has expreſſed his univerſal, diſintereſted goodneſs, and ſhewed that his moral character conſiſts in love. We have good authority therefore, even from the divine law, to ſay, that God is love. His love is as really expreſſed in the law, as in the goſpel. In the latter, this diſintereſted love and goodneſs, which appears in the law, is expreſſed and acted out in a more full and glorious manner and degree, and ſet in a more affecting and ſtriking light. In this ſenſe the law is good, it is love and goodneſs, as really as the goſpel. And as the divine holineſs is expreſſed in the law, in requiring love; ſo the creature, by

exerciſing this ſame love, is a partaker of God's holineſs, or of the divine nature, as the ſcripture repreſents the matter: He is transformed into the image of God; or, as St. John expreſſes it, "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him".*

Obj. The law is not all love and goodneſs. It requires love indeed, but it is guarded with the moſt awful ſanction, and curſes him who does not obey it perfectly. This

* 1 Joh. iv. 16. It is obſervable, that as the apoſtle ſays here, 'He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him,' he alſo ſays chap. iii. ver. 24. 'He that keepeth his commandments, dwelleth in him, and he in him.' Whence it appears, that *dwelling in love*, and *keeping God's commandments*, is the ſame thing: Conſequently love compriſes all the obedience required; or, as St. Paul ſays, 'Love is the fulfilling of the law.'

is not an expreſſion of love, but ſtrict and awful juſtice. What love can there be in curſing a ſinner, and puniſhing him forever? Love is exerciſed in *ſaving* ſinners, but not in *damning* them.

Ans. He who is infinitely good, is in the ſame degree an enemy to all oppoſition to the higheſt good. This will be the greateſt, the only crime in his view; and from this love, he will be diſpoſed to maintain his law, which requires love, in the puniſhment of all ſuch who turn enemies to the greateſt good of being, according to their deſert. This is the only way in which this love can properly expreſs itſelf in the divine law. Had God commanded love, and not threatened the contrary with the moſt dreadful puniſhment,

he would not have expreſſed his love and goodneſs, as he has done by this threatning. In this view, divine juſtice is nothing but the moſt perfect love and goodneſs, and exerciſed in a proper way againſt the enemies of this goodneſs, manifeſted in hating and puniſhing ſuch. And the ſufferings inflicted on the ſon of God, when he ſtood in the place of ſinners; and the eternal puniſhment of the wicked in hell, are the neceſſary effect and proper expreſſion of divine love; even that ſame love which is expreſſed in the precepts of God's law, or by any other medium. This is nothing but univerſal benevolence, which ſeeks the greateſt good of the whole, properly expreſſed in this way.

Divine love comprehends, wiſ-

dom, juſtice, truth and faithfulneſs, and every moral perfection and excellence whatſoever.* What is call-

* Wiſdom conſiſts in propoſing the wiſeſt and beſt end, and purſuing it by the moſt proper means. This is compriſed in univerſal benevolence, which fixes on the greateſt good of the whole, and ſeeks it as the ſupreme, ultimate end. He who has not univerſal benevolence, does not propoſe and purſue the wiſeſt and beſt end; but is wholly blind to it. Thus, univerſal, diſintereſted goodneſs appears to be that in which all true wiſdom conſiſts. This therefore muſt be the holineſs which is called wiſdom in ſcripture: And its oppoſite, ſelfiſhneſs is the fooliſhneſs, which is there oppoſed to wiſdom.

It may be alſo obſerved here that *righteous* and *holy* often mean the ſame thing in ſcripture; and *righteouſneſs* frequently intends holineſs; and is often uſed to expreſs the whole of God's moral character; though it is many times uſed in a more limited ſenſe, and intends holineſs as exerciſed with regard to ſome particular object. But it never ſignifies any thing which is not holineſs, and does not compriſe love; and the whole is comprehended in univerſal, diſintereſted benevolence. He who has this, is *righteous*; his heart is *right* towards all beings, and diſpoſed to give every one his due. This is

ed by theſe different names, is but one moſt ſimple thing, even divine LOVE; for GOD in his whole moral character is *love*. Take away love and goodneſs, and there will be neither wiſdom, truth, faithfulneſs, nor juſtice; for they have no exiſtence but in the exerciſe of love; and love implies all theſe, and neceſſarily acts out, ſo as to form a character, properly denoted by theſe names, as it appears to creatures in different relations, and reſpects different objects.

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righteouſneſs, in the moſt proper and comprehenſive ſenſe of the word; and without this love there is no righteouſneſs. Hence righteouſneſs ſeems to be put ſometimes for goodneſs and mercy. See Pſalm. 36. 10. 89. 16. 103. 17. 143. 11. 12. 145. 7.—So holineſs evidently means the divine goodneſs. See Pſal. 30. 4. 97. 12.

THE law of GOD then leads us to conſider holineſs as conſiſting in univerſal, diſintereſted good will, conſidered in all its genuine exerciſes and fruits, and acted out in all its branches towards GOD, and our neighbour. This holineſs is exerciſed towards GOD, in ſuch a regard and kind affection for him, as to be wholly devoted to his honor and intereſt, and the honor and glory of his kingdom, and ſeek it, as the higheſt and ultimate end. This good will exerciſed towards GOD, his kingdom and intereſt, with all thoſe affections it compriſes, is to love GOD with all the heart. This ſame holineſs or love is exerciſed towards our neighbour, in wiſhing and purſuing the greateſt good of all, and of ourſelves as included in the

whole; and in all that diſintereſted affection which is neceſſarily implied in this.

And let it be obſerved here, that this love to our neighbour, as it regards the greateſt good of the whole, as its chief object, and reſpects the good of individuals, as included in this; and as the greateſt good of mankind conſiſts in being the voluntary ſubjects and ſervants of Chriſt, in belonging to his kingdom, and promoting the higheſt intereſt of that: This love, I ſay, is not really a diſtinct thing from ſeeking the glory and kingdom of God; as theſe perfectly coincide. In ſeeking the glory of God, and intereſt of his kingdom, we neceſſarily ſeek the greateſt good of mankind; and ſo far as we are devoted to their beſt

intereſt, we act as friends to God, and ſeek his honor, and the intereſt of his kingdom. The whole therefore is ſummed up in *ſeeking firſt the kingdom of God*, or making this our ſupreme and ultimate end; ſo as to be willing to do or ſuffer any thing that ſhall be neceſſary or proper to promote this. In this the love of God and our neighbour center in one point, ſo that they cannot be divided; and this affection in which all holineſs conſiſts, really has but one object, viz. THE KINGDOM OF GOD. Our divine teacher ſets the matter in this light, and ſpeaks as no man would have ſpoken, when he directs men to ſeek the kingdom of GOD, as the only object of their purſuit, for

the ſake of which he commands them to forſake every other intereſt.*

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* See Matt. vi. 33. Luk. xii. 31. xviii 29. In Matthew, the words are, "Seek firſt the kingdom of God, and his righteouſneſs." The kingdom of God is the kingdom which Chriſt is erecting, and bringing to its higheſt perfection and glory; and comprehends God's moral kingdom, in its whole extent; in which is the full and moſt complete diſplay of the divine perfections, or glory; and all the good and happineſs of the creation. This is "that great city, the holy Jeruſalem," which St. John ſaw, "deſcending out of heaven from God, *having the glory of God*," Rev. xxi. 10 11. To ſeek this kingdom *firſt*, is to make the intereſt, happineſs and glory of it our ultimate end, ſo as to do all for its ſake, and ſubordinate every thing to this. This kingdom, conſidered in its full extent and all its appendages, is the firſt, the only object of the deſires and purſuit of Chriſt himſelf: So that in theſe words he directs his diſciples to imitate him, and be holy, as he is holy.

By *his righteouſneſs* is not meant any thing diſtinct from the kingdom of God. It intends the divine perfections diſplayed in this kingdom, in the glorious work of redemption, including the ſalvation of the redeemed, and the complete overthrow of all his enemies.

THAT love to God and our neighbour, which ſeeks the greateſt good of the whole, the greateſt diſplay of the divine perfections, and the higheſt happineſs of the creation will fix and center in this as the grand object; for this compriſes all the good

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In this ſenſe the word is uſed in the following paſſages. "The Lord God will cauſe *righteouſneſs* and *praiſe* to ſpring forth before all nations.—And the Gentiles ſhall ſee *thy righteouſneſs*, and all kings *thy glory*." Iſai. 61. 11 62. 2. "Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteouſneſs, ye that ſeek the Lord—For the Lord ſhall comfort Zion, &c.—— *My ſalvation* ſhall be for ever, and *my righteouſneſs* ſhall not be aboliſhed. Hearken unto me, ye that know *righteouſneſs*, the people in whoſe heart is my law, fear ye not the reproach of men. For the moth ſhall eat them up like a garment, and the worm ſhall eat them like wool; But *my righteouſneſs* ſhall be forever, and *my ſalvation* from generation to generation," chap. 51. 1,--8 Here, to follow after righteouſneſs and ſeek the Lord is to ſeek firſt the kingdom of God, and his righteouſneſs. And God's *righteouſneſs*, and

in the univerſe; all things being made, and every thing ordered and done by God, for the ſake of this, and in order to bring it to the high-eſt perfection and glory, and that it may compriſe the greateſt poſſible good. Nothing is of any worth in

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his ſalvation, mean the ſame thing. This being ſo, when St. Luke mentions this injunction of our Lord. he puts it in the following words, 'But rather ſeek ye *the kingdom of God*'; this including the whole: For if *his righteouſneſs* was not included in this, it would not be omitted

The ſame thing is inculcated by Chriſt, when he directs and encourages all to ſubordinate every thing, however dear to them, to this grand intereſt, and forſake all 'for the kingdom of God's ſake,' Luk. 18. 29. It is obſervable that in a parallel text (Mark 10. 29) inſtead of *the kingdom of God's ſake* the words are '*for my ſake, and the goſpel's*,' becauſe theſe words expreſs the very ſame thing. The kingdom of God and the goſpel are the ſame: Therefore to preach the goſpel, is to preach the kingdom of God. Luk 4. 43 9. 2. 60. Act. 20 25. And it is called the goſpel of the kingdom of

God's view, any further than it may ſerve to promote the glory and happineſs of this kingdom; and all the holineſs of creatures conſiſts in that love, which has this for its great object, and deſires and purſues this as the great and only intereſt, to which every thing elſe is ſubordinated.

II. It will ſerve to confirm what has been obſerved concerning the

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God, Mark. 1. 14. And as this is Chriſt's kingdom and intereſt, compriſing himſelf, and the whole which he ſeeks; whatever is done for the ſake of the kingdom of God, is done for his ſake.

The holineſs of the Mediator is wholly exerciſed in ſeeking this kingdom: His righteouſneſs, by which ſinners are juſtified, conſiſts in what he did and ſuffered for its ſake. And the holineſs of men conſiſts wholly in ſeeking this kingdom, which is love to God and their neighbour, or univerſal, diſintereſted benevolence.

law of God, and further ſhow what true holineſs is, according to ſcripture, if we conſider what is that divine love which is there repreſented as the holineſs of God, or that in which his moral character and glory is revealed; in conformity to which the holineſs of man conſiſts.

St. John ſays, 'God is love.' By which it is evident he means to expreſs the whole of God's moral character. And we have a good warrant to take his words in this ſenſe, from the divine law, which is a tranſcript of God's moral character, and requires nothing but *love*. The apoſtle tells us how this love appears, and wherein is the greateſt manifeſtation of it to man, viz. in giving his SON to die for the re-

demption of man, and accompliſhing all that good which is compriſed in it. 'In this was manifeſted the love of God towards us, becauſe that God ſent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.' This is wholly love of good will, as expreſſed in the higheſt act of kindneſs, and is the moſt perfectly diſintereſted love, as it is exerciſed towards enemies. This is elſewhere ſpoken of as that in which the love of God appears in its greatneſs, excellence and glory. 'But God *commendeth* his love towards us, in that while we were yet ſinners, Chriſt died for us.' This higheſt inſtance of the moſt diſintereſted benevolence is thus ſpoken of, as that in which the divine character, or God's holy love, is

acted out and ſet forth to our view. It hence appears, that diſintereſted benevolence is the love in which God's holineſs conſiſts. Therefore we are called upon to imitate this love of God, as that by which we may be like him, partakers of his holineſs. St. John ſays, when ſpeaking of this love of God, 'Beloved, if God ſo loved us, we ought alſo to love one another. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.' If we love one another with that love which God exerciſed and manifeſted in giving his ſon to die for us; we by this are conformed to God, his image is in us, and his love, which is his holineſs, is complete and perfect in us. What words could more expreſsly declare

hat the divine holineſs conſiſts moſt eſſentially in diſintereſted goodneſs; and that in the exerciſe of this, we are holy, as God is holy? To the like purpoſe is what Chriſt ſays to his diſciples. When he is recommending to them the higheſt exerciſe of diſintereſted benevolence, in love to their enemies; he tells them that they would hereby imitate God, who is good to his enemies; and then ſays, 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.' According to this, the holineſs and perfection of God and his people, conſiſts, ſo much at leaſt, in diſintereſted benevolence, that there is no moral perfection without it, in God or the creature. The reader will obſerve how exactly parallel theſe words of Chriſt are

to thoſe of St. John, we have been conſidering. He ſays, if we love one another, with a love of pure benevolence, like that which God exerciſed in giving his ſon to die for ſinners, 'God dwelleth in us, and *his love is perfected in us.*' Chriſt ſays, that in the exerciſe of this love, his diſciples ſhall be perfect as their heavenly Father is perfect.---

The ſame thing is declared by St. Paul. When ſpeaking of God's love and mercy to ſinners in forgiving ſin, and of the love of Chriſt in dying for ſinners, which are inſtances of diſintereſted goodneſs, he ſays to the Epheſian chriſtians, 'Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children, and walk in love:' Here he directs chriſtians to diſintereſted benevolence, by which they

would imitate God's holineſs, exerciſed in love to ſinners.

Thus we ſee the holy love of God is repreſented as conſiſting in diſintereſted benevolence and goodneſs, the higheſt and moſt remarkable exerciſe of which appears in redemption; in giving his ſon to die for ſinners, that they might live through him; and that the holineſs of men conſiſts in imitating this benevolent love, Hence it appears that, according to ſcripture, holineſs conſiſts in benevolence, and what is implied in it, and in nothing elſe.---

Obj. It is granted that holineſs conſiſts in part in love of benevolence; eſpecially as it reſpects indigent creatures: But God's holineſs does not conſiſt wholly, or

chiefly, in good will to men; but in love to himſelf; and the holineſs of men conſiſts principally in love to God: And it does not appear from theſe ſcriptures that this love to God, either in God or the creature, is of the nature of benevolence; but may be ſomething elſe; and ſo holineſs may not conſiſt principally in benevolent, diſintereſted affection.

Ans. 1ſt. In theſe ſcriptures, God's love of benevolence is ſpoken of as the moſt bright and ſtriking expreſſion of the excellence of his nature and character, or his holineſs; and that love in us which is an imitation of this love of God, is repreſented as that in which our conformity to God conſiſts; which could not be true, or a proper repreſentation, if holineſs conſiſted chiefly in ſome-

thing of another kind, not included in this. We have therefore good ground to conclude from theſe paſſages, that this is the leading excellence, and the ſum of all holineſs in God and the creature; eſpecially as holineſs exerciſed toward the creature muſt be of the ſame nature with that of which God is the object. But more eſpecially, as the object of holy love, God and the creation, is, in a ſenſe, one and the ſame, or are united in one object, the kingdom of God, as has been ſhown. According to this, loving our neighbour is really loving God, as love to God is implied in it. This ſeems to be expreſſed by St John in the paſſage we have been conſidering. 'No man hath ſeen God at any time, if we love one another, God dwelleth in

us, and his love is perfected in us,' i. e. by loving one another, while we fee and converfe with each other, with the love of benevolence and kindnefs, in doing good to others, our love to God is expreffed in the beft and moft perfect manner; efpecially as we herein imitate God, and follow him as his dear children.*

Ans. 2d. If this love of benevolence, this amazing goodnefs of God's nature, expreffed in redeeming finners, and giving them eternal life through Chrift, be fo much the

* Dr. Doddridge has, I think, given the true fenfe of this text, in his paraphrafe, in the following words, 'But as he (God) is the great fountain of benevolence, if we love one another, it appears that God dwelleth in us and that his love is perfected in us; for this is the beft proof we can give of our love to him, and of the prevalence of his grace in our hearts, transforming us into his image.

glory of the divine character, and ſuch a clear and bright expreſſion of his perfection and holineſs, as is repreſented in ſcripture, this gives us reaſon to conclude, that the love of which he himſelf is the object, is of the ſame nature and kind with this, viz. an infinite benevolent regard to himſelf; and that his love to man, expreſſed in giving his Son for his ſalvation, is a ſtream, and the brighteſt emanation from this fountain of love; and ſo ſhows the nature of the infinite divine love and holineſs. Therefore creatures have no need of any thing but this love, in order to be like God, little images of his infinite benevolence.

Ans. 3d. God's love and regard to himſelf is not excluded, but neceſſarily included in this inſtance of

his benevolence to ſinners, in giving his Son to die, that they through him, might live. This love to himſelf muſt be kept in view, in order to ſee his benevolence in giving his Son to die for ſinners; for had God no benevolent regard to himſelf, and care for his own honor, there would have been no need of giving his Son, that ſinners might live; as a Mediator would have been needleſs, in order to his being reconciled to ſinners. So that God's ſupreme regard to himſelf is ſuppoſed, yea expreſſed and brought clearly into view, in giving his Son to the world. And it is that regard to himſelf, and his own honor, which conſiſts in benevolence and its attendants and fruits, of which his benevolence

to man is an emanation and fruit; or rather they are one and the ſame thing, acted out in the work of redemption. In this view we may ſee how God's love in giving his Son to die for ſinners is a ſpecimen, and moſt clear diſplay of his holineſs, which conſiſts in benevolence, and why men are repreſented as imitating God in the exerciſe of the love of benevolence; their love to God and one another, being one and the ſame undivided affection.

What God ſays to Moſes, when he beſought him to ſhow him his glory, ſerves to confirm what has been ſaid on the above paſſages of ſcripture. In anſwer to Moſes's petition, God ſays to him, "I will "make all my *goodneſs* paſs before

" thee, and I will proclaim the
" name of the Lord before thee,
" and will be gracious to whom
" I will be gracious, and will
" ſhow mercy unto whom I will
" ſhow mercy." God here tells Moſes how he would ſhow his glory, and in what it conſiſted, viz. GOODNESS; ſovran goodneſs and mercy, which is the moſt diſintereſted benevolence poſſible. If God ſhowed Moſes his glory, by cauſing *all his goodneſs* to paſs before him; then God's holineſs, or his moral character, conſiſts in goodneſs; for holineſs is his glory.---And we are told how he did this; "The Lord
" paſſed by before him, and pro-
" claimed, The Lord, the Lord
" God, merciful and gracious,
" long-ſuffering, and abundant in

" goodneſs and truth;* keeping " mercy for thouſands, forgiving " iniquity, and tranſgreſſion and " ſin, and that will by no means " clear the guilty." Here there is nothing expreſſed but the higheſt, God-like benevolence or diſintereſted goodneſs. This therefore is that in which God's glory conſiſts; conſequently this is the divine holineſs; and this is the glory into which men are changed by the ſpirit of God, when they are made partakers of his holineſs.

When it is added, " And that " will by no means clear the guil-

* By *truth* nothing diſtinct from goodneſs is intended: it denotes the immutability of divine goodneſs: It is goodneſs that never fails, and may be depended upon with the greateſt ſafety. Where there is no goodneſs, there is no truth and faithfulneſs; and theſe are properties eſſential to the goodneſs of God.

" ty," nothing is expreſſed contrary to goodneſs, or different from it; but it expreſſes the peculiar excellence and perfection of God's goodneſs. It is a goodneſs which regards the greateſt good of the whole; a goodneſs which regards the intereſt and honor of the divine being; ſo that none of his rights ſhall be given up, or his law ſet aſide in favour of man, that mercy may be ſhowed to him. This is the thing meant by his not clearing or acquitting the guilty. This is the ſame goodneſs which is opened and celebrated in the goſpel, manifeſted in God's giving his Son to die for the redemption of ſinners, and granting them pardon and life through him. In this, God's love and regard to himſelf,

and goodneſs and mercy to ſinners, are joined together, as one and the ſame undivided thing. It is all divine benevolence; and it is the ſame goodneſs when it condemns and puniſhes the guilty, as when it pardons and ſaves the believer in Chriſt.---This goodneſs, this diſintereſted good will, is the glory of God: In this divine holineſs, the glory of God's moral character conſiſts; and ſo far as men exerciſe this goodneſs, they are holy as God is holy.

III. We are under great advantages to know what is true holineſs, by the character and example of Chriſt. He is the great pattern of holineſs, as it reſpects God and the creature; and the moſt bright and perfect inſtance of it, that ever was,

or will be, on earth: He has acted it out to the life. He is both God and man; and if we can find what is the true moral excellence of his character, we ſhall at the ſame time learn what divine and creature holineſs is, as it reſpects both God and man. It wholly conſiſted in conformity to that law, which he himſelf ſaid was fulfilled by love to God and our neighbour: Therefore it all conſiſted in love: And if we properly attend to what he has ſaid and done, we may, with the greateſt certainty, determine the nature and kind of this love. His love to men was, in the higheſt degree, diſintereſted benevolence, as it was love to enemies; and ſuch a regard for their good, as to lead him to be willing to take their miſery on

himſelf, and bear it all, that they might eſcape, and live forever. This is the higheſt inſtance of pure, diſintereſted benevolence that ever was known; and it is commonly ſpoken of as ſuch, and the excellency of it is owned to conſiſt very much in its being in ſuch a ſtriking degree *diſintereſted* love and goodneſs. Thus Chriſt's example of love to men conſiſts wholly in diſintereſted goodneſs: If this be left out, there remains nothing holy and excellent.

His love to God was alſo a diſintereſted, benevolent love, as it was acted out in ſeeking and promoting the glory of God. He ſought not his own glory, but the glory of him that ſent him. And this he himſelf ſpeaks of as that in which the diſ-

tinguiſhing excellence of his character conſiſted. This was the great thing he purſued, as the work he had to do. "I have glorified thee "on earth: I have finiſhed the "work which thou gaveſt me to "do." He ſubordinated every thing to this; and for its ſake, he gave up his own eaſe, and willingly endured the greateſt ſufferings. When in the view of his terrible ſufferings, he was reconciled to them, and willing to go through them, it was from a zeal for God's glory; and he expreſſed his whole heart in this matter, when he ſaid, "Father glorify thy name." As if he had ſaid, "Let God be glo-"rified, and all my ends are an-"ſwered; for the ſake of this, I have "undertaken this work and am

"willing to go through the dread-
"ful ſcene of ſufferings that is be-
"fore me." Thus, "Chriſt PLEAS-
"ED NOT HIMSELF, but, as it is
"written, the reproaches of them
"that reproached thee fell on me."
He pleaſed not himſelf, i. e. he
ſought not himſelf, was not in the
leaſt degree ſelfiſh; but at the great-
eſt diſtance from it. He had ſuch a
ſtrong, diſintereſted, benevolent re-
gard to the glory of GOD, in the
advancement of his kingdom, in
the ſalvation of men, that all the
reproach caſt upon GOD by ſin, fell
with its full weight on him; and
that he might vindicate the divine
character, and take away the re-
proach that would come on GOD
and his law, if ſinners were ſaved
without a complete atonement, he

took the reproach and puniſhment of ſin on himſelf; that hereby God might be honored in the ſalvation of ſinners. Thus *he pleaſed not himſelf*, but practiſed the greateſt ſelf-denial; and took all the evil on himſelf, that God might be glorified, and ſinners be ſaved: This St. Paul mentions as an example to his diſciples, in following which, they muſt not pleaſe themſelves, muſt not be ſelfiſh, and ſeek themſelves; but the good of others, in the exerciſe of diſintereſted benevolence. Thus he himſelf followed Chriſt, and imitated his holineſs, while he ſought not his own profit, but the profit of many, that they might be ſaved.*

* 1 Cor. x. 33. xi. 1. When the apoſtle

And here, by the way, we may ſee how Chriſt ſought one undivided intereſt in the exerciſe of diſintereſted benevolence. He was devoted to the greateſt general

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ſays "I ſeek not mine own profit, but the "profit of many, that they may be ſaved;" he expreſſes the moſt diſintereſted benevolence; and a diſpoſition to give up every thing that could be called his own, to promote the ſalvation of many. In this he followed Chriſt, who pleaſed not himſelf, and ſought not his own profit, but gave himſelf away, deliver d himſelf up to infinite evil, for the ſake of others, that they might be ſaved.

Theſe words lead us to the true ſenſe of that paſſage, which has been ſo difficult to many. "For I could wiſh that myſelf were accurſed "from Chriſt, for my brethren, my kinſmen "according to the fleſh" Rom. ix. 3. The plain meaning of theſe words is, that he intereſted himſelf ſo much in the ſalvation of his brethren, that he was willing to give up all his own perſonal intereſt in Chriſt, for their ſakes, if by this means they might be ſaved. This is the genuine expreſſion of diſintereſted benevolence, which always gives up a leſs good for a greater, and the private good of individuals for the ſake of the public good, or

good, the glory of God in the ſalvation of ſinners; or that kingdom of God in which God is glorified in the higheſt degree, and all the good of the creature is compriſed. So that his being wholly devoted to the glory of God in all he did and ſuffered, was not in the leaſt

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the ſalvation of many. Therefore, if the apoſtle could ſave all his brethren by giving up his own perſonal intereſt in Chriſt, he ought to be ready to do it; for not to do it, in this caſe, would be to ſeek his own profit, in oppoſition to the profit of many, and to act moſt contrary to benevolence; and to the example of Chriſt, who gave himſelf a ranſom for many, and was willingly *made a curſe*, that men might be ſaved from it.

I am ſenſible this ſenſe of the words is moſt contrary to all *ſelfiſh religion*; but it is perfectly conſiſtent with that charity, that diſintereſted benevolence, which "ſeeketh not her "own," but the profit of many, that they may be ſaved; without which it is impoſſible to be a true follower of Chriſt.

inconſiſtent with his benevolence to man, nor did in any degree exclude it; but the latter is implied in the former, and the more benevolence he exerciſed towards God in ſeeking his glory, the more love did he exerciſe and diſcover to man: So that Chriſt did not only ſeek the glory of God, and the ſalvation of men, and expreſs his love to God and man, in the ſame actions; but this was one and the ſame undivided affection, which centered in one and the ſame thing, the greateſt happineſs and glory of God's kingdom, or the greateſt good of the whole; ſo that he really ſought but one thing, which is all compriſed in the glory of God. And this may ſerve to remove a difficulty which has riſen in the minds of

ſome perſons with reſpect to this. They have aſked, "If the ultimate "end of Chriſt in what he did and "ſuffered was the glory of God, "ſo that this was the greateſt, and "in a ſenſe, the only thing he had "in view, and this induced him to "be willing to ſuffer unto death; "how can he be ſaid to lay down "his life for man, out of pure be-"nevolence to him? He never "would have done this, had it "not been for the love he had to "God, and regard for his glory. "What reaſon then has the ſinner "to thank him, for doing it out "of love to him? Certainly if he "was chiefly influenced in this by "love to God, his regard to man "had but a proportionably ſmall "influence in this affair."

THE ſolution is, the benevolence which Chriſt exerciſed towards GOD, and towards men, is one undivided affection. The glory of GOD, and the ſalvation of men by Chriſt, are not to be diſtinguiſhed, as different objects of purſuit. Therefore in ſeeking the glory of GOD, he ſought the ſalvation of men, and in ſeeking the ſalvation of men, he ſought the glory of GOD, the one being neceſſarily included in the other. And in this does the holineſs, the moral excellence of Chriſt conſiſt, according to ſcripture. Therefore we are left at no loſs about the nature of true holineſs in GOD and in the creature. It conſiſts in diſintereſted benevolence, and all that affection which

is included in this, in oppoſition to ſelf love.

Obj. But Chriſt himſelf ſought his own intereſt and glory; and had reſpect to the recompence of reward; "who *for the joy that was ſet* "*before him*, endured the croſs," &c.

Ans. 1. Jeſus Chriſt, in the exerciſe of diſintereſted benevolence, ſought the glory of God, and the higheſt happineſs and glory of his kingdom in the ſalvation of men, as the greateſt good. In this he placed his happineſs and joy. This was the great end he ſought in enduring the croſs, this was the joy that was ſet before him. Therefore he was ſo far from pleaſing or ſeeking himſelf in this, that the reward he ſought was the object of diſintereſted affection, and nothing elſe.

His benevolence ſet this up as a good, for the ſake of which he was willing to give up his life, and ſuffer an ignominious death.

Ans. 2. Chriſt's own honor and intereſt is included in the glory of God, and the greateſt good of the creation. As God, his own glory is the ſame with the glory of the Father: As man, his intereſt isgreat, as well as of infinite importance to the good of the whole. Therefore, as has been ſhown, diſintereſted benevolence, or love to God and men, implies a regard to himſelf, and a joy in his own happineſs and glory. There is not the leaſt degree of ſelfiſhneſs in this; but it is eſſential to diſintereſted benevolence.

IV. We may learn what is the

nature of true holineſs from what Chriſt ſays to his diſciples: "Ye "have heard that it hath been ſaid, "Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour, "and hate thine enemy; but I ſay "unto you, love your enemies, "bleſs them that curſe you, do "good to them that hate you,--- "that ye may be the children of "your Father which is in heaven; "for he maketh his ſun to riſe on "the evil and on the good.---For "if ye love them which love you, "what reward have ye? Do not "even the Publicans the ſame?--- "Be ye therefore perfect, even as "your Father which is in heaven "is perfect."

On this paſſage of Scripture we may obſerve the following things:

1. WHAT our Saviour here con-

demns is *ſelfiſhneſs*, which had been, by the Jewiſh teachers, juſtified and inculcated, as true holineſs, and obedience to the divine law, requiring us to love our neighbour as ourſelves. By our neighbour, they underſtood one who is kind to us, and our hearty friend. And our enemy they diſtinguiſhed from neighbour, and put in oppoſition to him, and taught that the latter is to be hated, that it is our duty to do ſo, and the former loved. This interpretation made the command very eaſy indeed, and brought it down to ſuit the heart of the moſt wicked man on earth. And all the ſelfiſh religion that is taught now, is as agreeable to corrupt nature, as this was then; which leads me to obſerve,

2. Christ condemns this, and

enjoins directly the contrary, even the moſt diſintereſted good will, in loving our worſt enemy, with tha kind, benevolent affection, which will lead us to do him all the good in our power.

3. He ſhows that this ſelfiſh love has nothing of the nature of true holineſs, by obſerving that ſinners, even the worſt of them; exerciſed ſuch love. They love thoſe that love them: for ſelfiſhneſs itſelf will do this. And by the way, Chriſt not only condemns ſelfiſhneſs here, as no part of holineſs, and in oppoſition to it; but his argument ſuppoſes that Publicans and ſinners, yea, all that are not the children of God, are wholly deſtitute of holineſs; for if they were not, his argument would not be concluſive.

4. THEREFORE love to enemies is here enjoined as eſſential to the character of a diſciple of Chriſt; ſo that no love which does not imply this diſintereſted benevolence, or love to enemies, is the love in which holineſs conſiſts, by which the true diſciples of Chriſt are diſtinguiſhed from others; every thing elſe, which does not imply this, being found with ſinners. According to this, diſintereſted benevolence, or that love which will extend to enemies, is the holy love which diſtinguiſhes the true diſciples of Chriſt from all others, and nothing will paſs for true holineſs in Chriſt's account, but ſuch love, and what is implied in it.

5. IT is by ſuch love alone that they are conformed to GOD, and

formed after the likeneſs of his moral perfection or holineſs. When Chriſt tells his diſciples, that by loving their enemies, they ſhould be the children of their Father which is in heaven, i. e, imitators or followers of God as dear children, it is implied that they could become ſo by nothing elſe. So that in this view, this kind of love is repreſented as the only holy love, as it is the only love by which they imitate God. And it hence follows alſo, that this is the love in which the divine holineſs conſiſts: For if it conſiſted in any thing of another kind, which this did not imply, they might be like God without love to their enemies. According to this repreſentation, God's holineſs, which conſiſts in love to himſelf and

his creatures, is ſuch, that it carries in its nature love to enemies; and therefore that love which is not of ſuch a nature, is not true holineſs. Therefore the chriſtian's love to God and Chriſt is of the ſame nature with love to enemies, which is diſintereſted benevolence; and in this his holineſs conſiſts.

6. We may alſo obſerve from this paſſage, though it is not immediately to the point we are upon, that the holy love by which chriſtians are diſtinguiſhed from others, will love God even though he were our enemy; therefore it is not neceſſary we ſhould ſee him to be our friend, or that he loves us, in order to our loving him. They who hold this, and that all true love to God is of this kind, teach a ſelfiſh religion, direct-

ly contrary to what Chriſt taught, and which he ſaid publicans and ſinners might have as well as chriſtians. If we cannot be Chriſt's diſciples, unleſs, we have a heart to love our enemies, even ſuch as are ſo unjuſtly, and are doing us all the injury they can; then none are his diſciples who have not a heart to love God, even though he is their enemy, and diſpoſed to curſe and deſtroy them; who cannot be an unjuſt and injurious enemy. Surely that diſpoſition which will love an enemy, who is unjuſtly and injuriouſly ſo, will not find it hard to love an enemy, who is ſo with the higheſt reaſon and juſtice. And all true love to God is of this kind; it is ſuch a generous, diſintereſted, benevolent affection, that it is ſo far from originating from

a belief of his love to us, that we ſhould continue to love him, even though he appeared to be our enemy; and that love which would fail in this caſe, is not true holineſs. Therefore it is certain, that he who does notlove his enemies, does not love God with a true holy love. This is, at leaſt, implicitly aſſerted here by our Saviour.

V. That all true holineſs conſiſts in diſintereſted benevolent affection, and what is implied in this, is evident from what St. Paul ſays, 1 Cor. xiii. Here the apoſtle ſpeaks of charity as compriſing all real holineſs, or true religion; by which he means that love to God and our neighbour, which the law of God requires *

* The word in the original ſignifies *love*

He ſays, whatever gifts and attainments a man may have, which may be without this love, he is ſtill nothing, and they will be no profit to him. And whatever exerciſes he has, and whatever he may do or ſuffer, and not have this love, he is yet nothing; by which it is very ſtrongly aſſerted, that love is true holineſs, and that nothing elſe has any thing of this nature. In giving the character of this holy love in its exerciſes, he ſays, It seeketh not her own. This aſcertains the nature of this love beyond diſpute. It is not ſelf-love, in whole or in part; for this always ſeeks her own, and nothing elſe. Yea, it is ſet in

and ought to have been ſo tranſlated here, as it is above an hundred times in the new teſtament.

oppoſition to ſelf-love, it SEEKETH NOT her own. Nothing can anſwer to this deſcription but that diſintereſted affection which conſiſts in benevolence, and what is implied it it; and this anſwers to it exactly. It is ſo deſcribed here, that nothing elſe can be meant. Therefore the apoſtle exhorts chriſtians to exerciſe this ſame holy love in the following words, "Let no man "ſeek his own. But every "man another's wealth." Let no man ſeek his own. i. e. *as his own*, in a ſelfiſh way. All ſelfiſhneſs is wholly forbidden. Let him put on that holy love which ſeeketh not her own; but ſomething elſe, viz. the general good of all. This charity, this benevolent diſintereſted affection, is the only bond of holy

union among intelligent beings, therefore it is called "the bond of "perfectneſs," i. e. the moſt perfect bond.

VI. THE words of St. Paul, "Whether therefore ye eat or "drink, or whatſoever ye do, do "all to the glory of GOD," might be mentioned here as pointing out the nature of holineſs, as exerciſed towards GOD. It is ſuch a love to GOD, which implies, and conſiſts in ſeeking his glory conſtantly in every action. But nothing but benevolence will do this. It is ſtrange that any ſhould think good-will is not to be exerciſed towards GOD, when we are in every thing to ſeek his glory; for the leaſt reflection on the matter, muſt convince every one, that nothing but good-will,

or friendly affection towards God, will ſeek his glory, or care any thing about it. This is to be conſtantly exerciſed towards God; ſo as in the ſtrength of it to devote ourſelves, every action, all we are, and all we have, to his intereſt and glory. And this is to exerciſe kind, diſintereſted affection towards God; in which we give up every other intereſt, for the ſake of his glory.

VII. Christians are expreſsly ſaid to live not unto themſelves, but unto Chriſt. "And that he di-
"ed for all, that they which live,
"ſhould not henceforth *live unto*
"*themſelves*, but unto him which
"died for them, and roſe again.
"For none of us liveth to him-
"ſelf, and no man dieth unto

" himſelf. For whether we live, " we live unto the Lord; and " whether we die, we die unto " the Lord." Here the chriſtian's life of holineſs, is ſet in oppoſition to ſelf-love, in which men live unto themſelves; which was their caſe before their converſion, and denotes a ſtate of total corruption: I ſay, chriſtian holineſs is oppoſed to this, and therefore muſt be diſintereſted affection; a benevolent regard to Chriſt, by which men devote themſelves wholly to him, living to his glory, and ſeeking the advancement of his kingdom: which implies love to men, and ſeeking the greateſt general good.

VIII. SCRIPTURE holineſs is that by which men devote and conſe-

crate themſelves to God, to be wholly for his uſe and ſervice. This is expreſſed by being holy *unto God;* It is therefore called *holineſs to the Lord.* It is with reference to this that all men and things, which were in a peculiar manner conſecrated to the ſervice of God by the Jewiſh ritual, were called *holy*; as there was in this conſecration an outward image and reſemblance of true holineſs; which is a voluntary conſecration to God, and devotedneſs to his ſervice. This is the ſame with *giving themſelves to the Lord.*

This will lead us to place holineſs in that univerſal benevolence, which has the kingdom of God for its object, and ſubordinates all to this. This conſecrates a man to

God, his honor, intereſt and kingdom, in the ſtrongeſt manner; and effectually draws him off from every other intereſt: and no other kind of affection will do this.---Therefore this is holineſs, according to ſcripture.

Who can attend to this ſcripture account of holineſs, and not be ſenſible that univerſal, diſintereſted goodneſs is the leading and moſt eſſential thing in it; and that where this is wanting, there is no holineſs; and this implies the whole? The word *love* is ſeldom, if ever, uſed in any other ſenſe in the Bible, where a holy affection is meant. And this is perfectly agreeable to the account that has been given of true holineſs, which is the only reaſonable, conſiſtent idea that can

be given of it, viz. That it is univerſal benevolence, and all that love of complacency and delight, and every diſintereſted affection which is implied in this; and cannot take place without it.

SECTION VII.

Anſwers to ſeveral objections againſt the foregoing account of true holineſs.

OBJ. I. TRUE chriſtians ought to have reſpect to the reward they ſhall receive in heaven, for what they do and ſuffer in this world. It is expreſsly aſſerted that Moſes had; and is ſpoken of as part of the excellence of his character. This is contrary to the

disinterested affection, in which it is said all true religion consists.

Ans. 1. If the recompence of reward to which Moses had respect, consisted in being confirmed in God's service and favour forever, and put under the greatest advantages to glorify God, and promote the interest of his church, and in seeing this accomplished to the highest degree; then there was nothing selfish in this, but it was the genuine exercise of that disinterested religion, which consists in love to God and our neighbour. The disinterested, benevolent person seeks a recompence of reward, as much as any other person can, and more; but it is a reward with which benevolence itself is well pleased, and not selfishness. Self-

ifhnefs never feeks the reward which God gives his people; this is fuited to gratify benevolence only: Therefore it is refpected and fought only in the exercife of benevolence.

Ans, 2. It has been obferved, that the benevolent perfon feeks his own higheft good, as this is included in the higheft good of the whole; and that his attention and concern is more particularly turned to this intereft, as it is more in his view, and is more efpecially under his care, and he is under better advantages to promote it, than the intereft of another. Therefore it is no argument of felfifhnefs in Mofes, or any other man, that he has refpect to his own future happinefs.

Obj. II. The promises and threatnings in the word of God are all directed to self-love. They suppose that all men have self-love, and are suited to influence this, and nothing else. If a person has nothing but disinterested affection, promises and threatenings will be of no use to him. If men ought not to have any self-love, why does God address himself to that in his word, and seek to lead men to avoid sin, and practise holiness, in the exercise of self-love?

Ans. 1. The promises and threatenings in the word of God, suppose men possessed of a desire after happiness, with an aversion to evil, and a regard for their own interest, answerable to its worth. This is

ſo far from being inconſiſtent with the moſt diſintereſted affection, that it is implied in it, as has been proved at large. Therefore promiſes of good, and threatenings of evil, are as much ſuited to influence the benevolent perſon, as him that is ſelfiſh.

Ans. 2 The good promiſed is a good which benevolence ſeeks, and it has the moſt perfect averſion to the evil threatened; and the benevolent perſon has a much more clear and realizing view and ſenſe of the greatneſs and deſirableneſs of the good and the dreadfulneſs of the evil, than the ſelfiſh perſon can have. This being ſo, the promiſes and threatenings in the Bible are ſo far from ſuppoſing that men ought to regard them from ſelf-love, or that there is any

ſelfiſhneſs in true religion, that their proper end is anſwered only in them who are influenced by diſintereſted benevolence; and ſuch only pay a proper regard to them. The ſelfiſh perſon may be influenced many ways, and to a great degree, by the threatenings and promiſes in God's word: They may excite high hopes and great fears, and reſtrain him from many things he would otherwiſe practiſe, and lead him to do many things; but they will not influence him to forſake ſin, and practice holineſs, or to love God and his neighbour; but after all, he is as much under the power of ſin as ever.

And it is to be obſerved, that the promiſes are not made to ſelfiſh exerciſes and doings; and there-

fore, rightly underſtood, are not ſuited to encourage ſelf-love, but benevolence. All the promiſes and threatenings in the Bible oppoſe ſelfiſhneſs, and are calculated to deſtroy it, and encourage diſintereſted affection, love to God and our neighbour, ſo far are they from encouraging ſelf-love.

Christ promiſes honor and exaltation to them who humble themſelves. Should any one hence infer, that this promiſe was deſigned to encourage pride in ſeeking exaltation and honor, and that pride is a duty, he would be guilty of a great abſurdity and ſelf-contradiction; for this would be ſaying, a man ought to exerciſe pride in ſeeking humility; and that Chriſt has ſet before us a motive to excite pride,

in order to induce us to be humble. This promise is so far from encouraging pride, that it tends to destroy it. The honor and exaltation promised, is not that which pride seeks, but that which is most opposite to it. And should a proud man be hence influenced by his pride, to seek humility, he might put on some external appearances of it; but he would be as far as ever from real humility, for by the supposition, all his exercises are exercises of pride; and humility is not the object of his desire, but of his aversion. This may serve to illustrate the case before us, and show how far the divine promises are from being suited to encourage pride and selfishness; and that they encourage nothing but benevolence.

And it alſo leads to another anſwer.

Ans. 3. The great and chief good which is promiſed in the word of God, is not a good that pleaſes ſelfiſh perſons, and therefore is not deſigned, nor ſuited to excite ſelf-love. As the duties to which the promiſes are made, are contrary to ſelf-love; ſo is the chief good that is promiſed. The honor and exaltation promiſed to humility, are as contrary to pride, as is humility itſelf. The honor which the proud man ſeeks, is not the ſame which Chriſt promiſes to him who humbleth himſelf; but entirely of a different nature, and contrary to it. A perſon who humbles himſelf, renounces that ſelf-exaltation and honor, in compariſon with other beings,

which pride and ſelfiſhneſs ſeek; and places his honor and happineſs in abaſing himſelf, and becoming the ſervant of all, by exalting God, and promoting his glory, and ſerving his fellow-creatures; miniſtering to their greateſt good, in the exerciſe of univerſal benevolence; and ſo obtains true exaltation and honor, which is moſt contrary to ſelfiſhneſs and pride. So the happineſs in general, which is the ſubject of divine promiſes, is not a happineſs which ſuits ſelf-love, nor can it be induced to deſire and ſeek it. This is a happineſs which conſiſts in glorifying God and promoting the intereſt of his kingdom: In devoting ourſelves wholly to this; and ſeeing it promoted to the higheſt degree. This good is therefore juſt as con-

trary to ſelf-love, as is univerſal, diſintereſted benevolence. This good is ſuited to pleaſe the benevolent, and excite them to purſue the practice of holineſs, and ſeek this glory, honor and happineſs; but to ſelf-love, is the object of averſion.

If theſe things be well conſidered it will appear how groundleſs this objection is. If the benevolent perſon be as capable of being influenced by promiſes and threatenings, as any one elſe, and much more; and theſe be ſuited to animate him in the practice of diſintereſted, univerſal benevolence and goodneſs.----If the promiſes and threatenings in the Bible, be, in a peculiar manner, ſuited to encourage and promote benevolence.--

If neither the duty to which the promiſes are made, nor the chief good promiſed, be agreeable to ſelf-love, nor can be choſen and embraced by it: Then there being ſo many promiſes, and threatenings in the Bible, is not the leaſt evidence that true religion does not conſiſt in diſintereſted affection, or that ſelf-love is any part of it. But the contrary appears with ſtrong and irreſiſtible evidence, even from theſe conſiderations.

Obj. III. There is not ſuch a difference and oppoſition between what is called benevolence and ſelf-love, as has been ſuppoſed; nor is there any ſuch thing as *diſintereſted* benevolence; men are ſeeking their own happineſs in all their affections and exerciſes. He that ſeeks

the good of another, does it becauſe he takes pleaſure in it; and he ſeeks his own pleaſure and happineſs as much as he who ſeeks his own perſonal good only; and the one is as much ſelf-love as the other, And men are friendly to one thing rather than another, becauſe one gives them pleaſure, and the other does not: So that ſelf-love is at the bottom of all; and one man is really as ſelfiſh as another; all the difference is, one man's ſelfiſhneſs operates in a different way from that of another man: All love ſprings from ſelf-love, and cannot be diſtinguiſhed from it.

Ans. 1. If by ſelf-love the objector means a general appetite to happineſs, and averſion to miſery, or a capacity of pleaſure and pain;

it is granted that this takes place in benevolence, as much as in self-love. But, as has been shown, this is in itself neither selfishness, nor disinterested affection; but only a capacity for either.

Ans. 2. It is true that disinterested affection gives a higher pleasure and enjoyment than self-love; and therefore it is greatly for a person's interest to place his happiness in the glory of God, and the interest of his kingdom, and the greatest good of mankind: But it does not hence follow, that the pleasure to be enjoyed in loving God and our neighbour is the cause of this love; or the inducement to a selfish person to love God, in order to answer a selfish end, and make himself happy. I

ſay, this does not follow, for two reaſons:

1. This is to put the cauſe for the effect, and the effect for the cauſe. The ground and reaſon of a perſon's taking pleaſure in the happineſs of his neighbour, is his diſintereſted good will to him; and not this pleaſure the cauſe of his good will to his neighbour. But the objector ſuppoſes the latter, viz. that the pleaſure a perſon has in benevolence is the cauſe of his loving his neighbour, which is abſurd.

2. There is a contradiction in ſuppoſing that ſelf-love will lead a perſon to place his happineſs in his neighbour's good; for the latter ſtands in direct contradiction to the former. Selfiſhneſs is directly oppoſed to a perſon's placing his hap-

pineſs in the good of another: This conſiſts in an oppoſite affection, to which ſelfiſhneſs cannot be reconciled. Nor can the ſelfiſh perſon ſo much as have an idea of the enjoyment which attends benevolence; and therefore it is impoſſible that the happineſs benevolence gives, ſhould be a prevailing motive with him, to love and ſeek the happineſs of another, that he may hereby make himſelf happy.

If one ſhould ſuppoſe that becauſe exaltation and honor is the certain attendant of humility, this will induce a proud man, in the exerciſe of his pride, to be humble, for the ſake of the honor he will obtain by it; and therefore that pride and humility are at bottom the ſame thing, and ſeek the

ſame honor, the ſuppoſition would be as conſiſtent and rational, as that we are conſidering.

If a perſon places his happineſs in the good of his neighbour, it may be aſked, how came he to do this, rather than another; and by what medium does he enjoy this pleaſure? The anſwer muſt be this; the former is a friend to his neighbour, and this gives him pleaſure in his happineſs: Whereas the latter is not his friend, and bears no good-will to him, but regards his own intereſt only, and therefore cannot take pleaſure in his neighbour's good. The character of theſe two men are eſſentially different; their exerciſes are of a different and oppoſite nature; the latter is a lover of his own ſelf only;

the former loves his neighbour as himself, and is so united to him, in disinterested good-will, that he necessarily shares in his happiness. In this case he does not love his neighbour, in order to get possession of his happiness, this is not the motive of his benevolence; for this is a contradiction. It is impossible he should get possession of his neighbour's happiness in this way, and from this motive, for so far as he acts from such a motive, he, by the supposition, cares nothing about it, and it is no happiness to him. Nothing but disinterested benevolence will give him a share in his neighbour's good; this is the ground, and cause of his enjoying it, and not a desire of enjoying this happiness the ground

of his benevolence. So far as a man defires to enjoy his neighbour's happinefs from felf-love, juft fo far he is incapable of enjoying it. The more he defires it therefore, in this fenfe, the further he is from it.

Ans. 3. Difintereftfed good-will, which puts a man in poffeffion of his neighbour's happinefs, alfo makes him fhare in his mifery, if he be miferable, and bear his burdens. But this is moft contrary to felf-love; which therefore is oppofed to benevolence. If felf-love would lead a perfon to take pleafure in his neighbour's happinefs, and fhare in his good, and this were poffible; it would not certainly, defire to fhare in his mifery, and fo put him in poffeffion of that too. But be-

nevolence does this, therefore it is not self-love, nor the fruit and offspring of it; but an affection of a different and opposite nature.

Obj. IV. Holiness consists, in part, in hatred of sin; therefore it does not wholly consist in love; for hatred is opposite to love.

Ans. Hatred of sin is not opposed to the love of benevolence; for we may love them who are most vile and odious, with a love of good-will, and are commanded to do it. And God loved sinners with the greatest benevolence, while they were odious to him, and he hated them with a perfect hatred of disapprobation and displicence. Thus we may, and are obliged to love and hate the same persons, at the same time, in many instances; to

love them with a love of good-will, and yet hate them with a hatred of diſplicence.

Nor is this diſplicence, and hatred of ſin, oppoſed to the love of complacence, ſo as to imply any thing of a contrary nature. Hatred of ſin, is implied in all holy love; and that affection which takes complacence in holineſs, is exerciſed in the hatred of ſin; it being in its nature, one and the ſame thing, exerciſed towards different objects. Love to God is, in its nature, diſpleaſure at enmity againſt him; and neceſſarily hates thoſe who hate him; not with the hatred of ill will, but of diſapprobation and diſplicence.

SECTION VIII.

Inferences from the foregoing account of the nature of true holineſs.

I. FROM the view that has been given of holineſs, we are led to obſerve the impropriety of which many have been guilty in ſpeaking of holy, chriſtian love, as conſiſting chiefly, if not wholly, in love of complacence. It has been very common, where love to GOD, and love to our brother is ſpoken of and explained, very much, if not wholly, to overlook the love of benevolence, and keep the love of complacence chiefly or altogether in view. This is not agreeable to ſcripture, which I truſt

appears from what has been ſaid. The love of benevolence is chiefly kept in view there, as what comprehends the whole of holy love; and we cannot have, or communicate a proper notion of holineſs, if we depart from the holy ſcripture in this particular. This has doubtleſs been the occaſion of great confuſion, and many miſtakes.

II. We may hence learn what true *ſelf-denial* is, and in what it conſiſts.

Our Lord teaches us, that in becoming his diſciple, a man muſt deny himſelf: That there is no other way to be a chriſtian; and this muſt be practiſed in every ſtep in which men follow him, "If any man will come after me, let him *deny himſelf*,

and take up his cross daily, and follow me." This self-denial consists, most essentially in acting contrary to self-love, in crossing that, and giving up the interest that it seeks, for the sake of some other interest; or in giving up our own private, personal interest, for the sake of the glory of God, and the greatest good of mankind; which is the same with exercising disinterested affection; or to love God with all our heart, and our neighbour as ourselves. Self-denial consists in the exercise and practice of true holiness, as it has been described above, and in nothing else; in which self is renounced, and men forsake the whole interest which self-love seeks, for the sake of the kingdom of God. Whatever men do or suffer, what-

ever they give up, for the ſake of this, they deny themſelves; and where there is nothing of this diſintereſted love exerciſed, there is no ſelf-denial, whatever is done or ſuffered; as ſelf is not in the leaſt renounced. Chriſt himſelf is the moſt perfect example of ſelf-denial; which conſiſted in ſeeking not his own glory, but the glory of the Father, and the greateſt good of the creation, in promoting the kingdom of God, the whole of which is expreſſed by the apoſtle in the following words, "For even Chriſt *pleaſed not himſelf.*"

Self denial does not therefore conſiſt meerly in croſſing our natural inclinations, in parting with that which is very dear to us, or going through great toil and ſufferings,

to obtain ſome end. When this is done, not for our own ſake, or from ſelf-love; but for Chriſt's ſake, or for the ſake of the kingdom of God, it is true ſelf-denial. But when it is done for our own ſakes wholly, there is no ſelf-denial in it. The moſt ſelfiſh creature in the world may part with one good for the ſake of another, by which he greatly croſſes ſome of his inclinations and appetites; and many go through great labour and ſufferings, purely to pleaſe himſelf, or gratify his ſelf-love. Thus a man may give up his eaſe, and practice hard ſervice and toil, throughout a whole year, for the ſake of the wages he is to receive, while he is wholly ſelfiſh in what he does and ſuffers, having no regard to any other intereſt but

his own. So a man may be willing to do and ſuffer many things, and croſs many of his own natural inclinations to a great degree, for the ſake of his eternal intereſt, that he may obtain ſalvation, purely form ſelf-love. In this there is no ſelf-denial.

A MAN may give all his goods to the poor, and devote his whole life to the moſt ſevere diſcipline, and practice the greateſt auſterities imaginable; and then give his body to be burned, with a view to eſcape hell, and obtain heaven; and yet if he has not that charity which ſeeketh not her own, but does and ſuffers all wholly under the influence of ſelf-love, there is no true ſelf-denial in it; but it is as really ſelf-gratification, and

pleaſing himſelf, as if he indulged his ſenſual appetites in riot and wantonneſs; and there is really no more true religion in it. For there is no more true holineſs in deſiring and ſeeking eternal happineſs in a ſelfiſh way, and from ſelf-love, than there is in deſiring any temporal, worldly enjoyment.*

* Of this ſort, we have reaſon to think, are all the abſtinences, faſtings, prayers, whippings and auſterities, as well as giving large ſums of money, practiſed by multitudes in the popiſh world, for the ſake of obtaining the heaven they have in view. And of the ſame kind are all the labors and painful doings and ſufferings; all the reformations and abſtinencies; yea, every thing elſe that men do or ſuffer in the practice of religion, and with a view to obtain ſalvation, in the proteſtant world, or any where elſe, who act wholly from ſelf-love, and have no diſintereſted regard to Chriſt and his kingdom. There is no ſelf-denial in all this.—But, by the way, the heaven and happineſs which theſe ſelfiſh perſons are ſeeking by all their pains, whether in popiſh or proteſtant countries, is no more like the true happineſs of heaven, than is the mahometan paradiſe.

But here two queſtions ariſe, which may be worthy of particular conſideration, as it may ſerve to throw ſome light on this ſubject.

Quest. I. Do perſons give up their *eternal intereſt* in ſelf-denial, ſo as not to have a ſelfiſh regard to this in their religious exerciſes? 'Tis eaſy to ſee that perſons may and ought to give up their own private, temporal intereſt, in many inſtances, at leaſt, and to a great degree, for the ſake of others, and to promote the greater general good.---But is it not unreaſonable, and even impoſſible, for them to diſregard and give up their own *eternal intereſt*, for the ſake of others, or for any thing whatſoever?

Ans. 1. Whatever temporal good any one gives up for the ſake of his own eternal intereſt, and wholly from ſelf-love, he is, by the ſuppoſition, as ſelfiſh in this, as he can be in any thing whatſoever; and therefore there is no ſelf-denial in it, if ſelf-denial be acting contrary to ſelf, or denying ourſelves. So that he who does not know how to deny himſelf with reſpect to his eternal intereſt, is really a ſtranger to ſelf-denial. To give up our temporal, worldly intereſt, for the ſake of eternal happineſs, wholly under the influence of ſelf-love, is as real an inſtance of ſelfiſhneſs, as parting with all we have now, to poſſeſs a large eſtate the next year. Therefore, if no perſon can renounce his eternal

intereſt, in oppoſition to a ſelfiſh regard to it, there is no ſuch thing in nature as ſelf-denial, or public, diſintereſted affection. But let it be kept in mind, that in the practice of the greateſt ſelf-denial, a perſon does not diveſt himſelf of a love of happineſs; for this is impoſſible, as has been ſhown, as well as contrary to the ſuppoſition. But he places his happineſs, not in his own private intereſt; but in a good more worthy to be ſought, viz: the glory of God, and the proſperity of his church and kingdom. For the ſake of this, he gives up the former, and forgets himſelf.

Ans. 2. There is the ſame reaſon why ſelf-love ſhould be wholly croſſed, in every inſtance, as there is that it ſhould be croſſed at all;

ſo the ſame reaſon that our whole intereſt, ſo far as it is the object of ſelf-love, ſhould be given up, for the ſake of an intereſt of unſpeakable more worth.

True benevolence always ſeeks the greateſt good of the whole; and is a diſpoſition to give up the leſs good for the greater. That affection which heſitates at this, and makes any ſelfiſh conditions, is private affection, not public love. If benevolence will lead us to forſake our perſonal intereſt, in any degree, it will lead us to forſake it *wholly*, for the greater good of others, if it be exerciſed to a ſufficient degree, and there is nothing ſelfiſh in us to counteract and oppoſe it.

If we conſider what God is, how

infinitely great, important and deſirable, and of what infinite worth are his being, happineſs and glory; and how infinitely worthy and excellent he is: What an abſolute and infinite right he has to us, and to all creatures, to diſpoſe of them as he ſees fit, in his infinite wiſdom and goodneſs, for his own happineſs and glory, and for the greateſt glory and happineſs of his kingdom: I ſay, if we well conſider this, it muſt appear moſt fit and reaſonable, that we ſhould love him above all, and without any reſerve, i. e. with all our hearts, &c, and give up ourſelves *wholly* to him, to be for his uſe, that his ends may be anſwered by us; and he be, in the higheſt degree, bleſſed, and glorified, and his kingdom moſt

happy and glorious forever, let what will become of us, and without making any conditions with regard to ourſelves. Therefore it becomes us always to feel ſo towards God, and place our whole happineſs in his felicity and glory; having, in this ſenſe, no will of our own. But this is denying ourſelves, and giving up the whole of our own intereſt for his ſake. A chooſing to be wholly devoted to him, and to be and do every thing wholly for his ſake, is to chooſe to do nothing for our own ſakes; which is to give up the whole that ſelf-love ſeeks.

If we make conditions in this caſe, and are willing that God ſhould be ſupreme, and have the whole diſpoſal of us, and glorify himſelf by us, IF he will ſecure our

highest personal interest, and employ all his wisdom and goodness in our behalf; but are disposed to oppose this, on any other condition; there is no disinterested affection to God in this, nor indeed any true love to him; nor is there any self-denial in it: Yea, it is itself real opposition to God; and the most selfish creature, and the greatest enemy to God in the universe, may be brought to this, consistent with all his selfishness and enmity.

It is true, indeed, as has been shown, that the most disinterested affection does not exclude proper regard to our own being and interest; but necessarily includes it: But it must be observed, that if our own personal interest be inconsistent with the general good; universal be-

nevolence will give it all up, for the ſake of this greater good; for to be unwilling to give up our own intereſt, when the public good requires it, is criminal ſelfiſhneſs, and enmity to being in general; and therefore enmity againſt God.

For the ſame reaſon for which I ſhall be willing that the intereſt of any individual in the univerſe ſhould not be regarded, but given up, when inconſiſtent with the general good, I ſhall be willing to give up my own intereſt, on the ſame ſuppoſition, if I am governed by benevolence. Therefore, however great and important is our whole intereſt, temporal and eternal, we ought to be willing to give it all up, if it be inconſiſtent with the higheſt intereſt, the greateſt

glory of HIM who is at the head of the univerſe, and the ſum of all being and perfection; and true benevolence will do this; ſince the latter intereſt is infinitely greater, and more important than the former, and that not worthy of any regard, in compariſon with this.

But this leads to another queſtion.

Quest. II. How can our eternal intereſt be inconſiſtent with the greateſt diſplay of God's glory, and the higheſt intereſt of his kingdom? Are not theſe ſo united together, that they cannot be ſeparated; how then can the former be given up, for the ſake of the latter?---

Ans. If we know that we are true chriſtians, we may be ſure that it is

for the glory of God, and good of the whole, that we ſhould be eternally happy in his kingdom. But even in this caſe, we are capable of making the ſuppoſition that it would not be ſo; and, on this ſuppoſition, we ſhall be diſpoſed to give up all our perſonal intereſt, ſo far as we are in the exerciſe of diſintereſted affection, and willing to deny ourſelves.----But if we do not know that we have embraced the goſpel, we cannot be ſure that it is, on the whole, moſt for the honor of God, and the glory and happineſs of his kingdom, that our eternal happineſs ſhould be ſecured: So we have opportunity to try how we ſhall feel, and be diſpoſed, on ſuch a ſuppoſition. In this caſe, the language of ſupreme love to God

will be to this purpoſe: "Let infinite wiſdom dictate. Let God reign, and diſpoſe of me and all creatures, ſo as ſhall be moſt for his own glory, and the greateſt good of the whole, whatever becomes of me, and my intereſt." In this caſe, not to have infinite wiſdom order; not to have God ſupreme, and diſpoſe as pleaſes him, ſo as to glorify himſelf in the higheſt degree, and make his kingdom moſt perfect and happy, would be a greater evil, infinitely greater, to the true friend of God and his kingdom, than the giving up his own perſonal intereſt: Yea, on ſuppoſition his own intereſt and higheſt happineſs is inconſiſtent with the glory of God, it will be worth nothing, and worſe than nothing

to him. He will therefore ſay with Moſes, "Blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book." If God may not be God, and order all things for his own glory, and the greateſt good of his kingdom; and if my ſalvation is inconſiſtent with this, I give all up, I have no intereſt of my own to ſeek or deſire.

It is true, he who has ſuch diſintereſted, benevolent exerciſes, muſt be happy ſo long as God reigns, and is glorified, and his kingdom is in the higheſt degree advanced; becauſe this, by the ſuppoſition, is become his good, or he places his happineſs in this. And when he comes to know, that he is thus devoted to God, he may be ſure of his own eternal ſalvation. But let it be obſerved, he muſt *firſt* have ſuch

exerciſes of diſintereſted affection as theſe, before he can have any evidence that he ſhall be ſaved; for he muſt become a friend to God, before he can have any evidence that he is intereſted in his favour, and ſhall inherit eternal life.

Quest. III. How can we in any caſe give up our own eternal intereſt for God's ſake, and for the intereſt of his kingdom, ſince by devoting ourſelves to God, we take the moſt ſure and the only way to ſecure and promote our own higheſt good, in our eternal ſalvation: Is there not an inconſiſtence in this?

Ans. Though a perſon by giving himſelf to God in the exerciſe of diſintereſted affection, in this way denying himſelf for God's ſake,

does, indeed take the moſt direct and effectual way to true happineſs, and to ſecure and promote his higheſt intereſt: Yet he as really gives it up for God's ſake, as if he did not ſecure and promote it in this way. And he does as truly deny himſelf, as if he did really and eternally loſe his whole intereſt.----Therefore it does not hence follow that he is ſelfiſh, and ſeeks his own private interereſt in giving himſelf to God, and loving God more than himſelf: For this is a contradiction, being the ſame as to ſay he is ſelfiſh, and loves himſelf more than God, in renouncing ſelf, and loving God more than himſelf, and doing all for God's ſake.

Christ, when ſpeaking of ſelf-

denial, ſays; "Whoſoever will ſave his life ſhall loſe it; but whoſoever ſhall loſe his life for my ſake and the goſpel's the ſame ſhall ſave it." That is, he who is ſo ſelfiſh, as not to be willing to deny himſelf, and give up his own intereſt, even all of it, for my ſake, out of a diſintereſted regard to me, and my kingdom, he ſhall miſs of all true happineſs, and muſt neceſſarily loſe it forever. But he, who in the exerciſe of diſintereſted affection, denies himſelf for Chriſt's ſake and the goſpel's, and places his happineſs in Chriſt's honor and intereſt, ſhall be really happy, and ſecure his higheſt intereſt forever. But it does not follow from this, that a man ſeeks his own life and happineſs

in a ſelfiſh way, and ſo does all for his own ſake, in loſing his life for Chriſt's ſake and the gospel's; for this involves a contradiction. And if this could be, it would not be ſelf-denial, but ſelf-gratification.

III. What has been ſaid of the nature of holineſs, will help us to diſtinguiſh between true religion, and that which is falſe. The leading and moſt eſſential difference lies here: True religion conſiſts in diſintereſted affection, and "ſeeketh not her own:" Falſe religion wholly conſiſts in ſelfiſh affections and exerciſes. The former is true holineſs; the latter is nothing but ſin.

This will ſerve as a touch-ſtone, by which we may try the various

doctrines and ſchemes of religion, which are embraced and contended for by profeſſed chriſtians. If they be the dictates of univerſal, diſintereſted benevolence, and ſuited to pleaſe and promote this, they are doctrines according to godlineſs. But if they are ſuited to gratify ſelf-love only, and formed on a ſelfiſh plan, they have no foundation in ſcripture.

There are many who profeſſedly make ſelf-love the foundation of all religion, and repreſent it as wholly a ſelfiſh thing, from beginning to end. They do ſo, who teach that love to God, and all practical religion has its foundation wholly in a belief that God loves us, and has forgiven our ſins; and that the faith by which the juſt do live, conſiſts moſt

eſſentially in this belief. And this ſelfiſhneſs is involved in the ſcheme of religion that many others embrace. The *five points*, ſo long diſputed between calviniſts and arminians, being examined by this criterion, it will appear, I doubt not, on which ſide the truth lies. The latter form a ſcheme of doctrines exactly ſuited to gratify the ſelfiſhneſs and pride of man; to exalt men, at the expence of the honor of God, and happineſs and glory of his kingdom. That of the former is ſuited to exalt God, and diſplay the glory of his grace, in the happineſs and glory of his moral kingdom; and therefore is moſt agreeable to the dictates of univerſal benevolence. * He whoſe head

* The doctrines here referred to are,

and heart are truly formed upon this diſintereſted, benevolent plan, will not find it difficult to diſtinguiſh between thoſe doctrines which are the dictates of ſelfiſhneſs and pride; and ſuch as are ſuited to exalt God, and abaſe man, and ſet up the glory of God, and his kingdom, as the ſupreme end of all: And will cordially embrace the latter, and renounce the former.

And this will help us to a rule to *try the ſpirits* of men, ſo far as we are to judge of their hearts by their practice. A man appears to have true religion, who embraces the doctrines which are *according to*

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1. God's decrees. 2. Original ſin. 3. Man's moral impotency. 4. Juſtification by faith, through imputed righteouſneſs. 5. The perſeverance of the ſaints. Calviniſts take the poſitive ſide. Arminians the negative.

godlineſs, and appears to be devoted to the honor of God, and the Redeemer, and the advancement of his intereſt and kingdom in the world; for which he is at all times ready to ſpend, and be ſpent. And he is kind to his fellow men, doing good to all as he has opportunity; and eſpecially good to the profeſſed friends of Chriſt and his kingdom: He puts on "bowels of mercies, kindneſs, humbleneſs of mind, meekneſs, long-ſuffering, &c. * And if a perſon appears in his life and converſation to be wholly ſelfiſh

* Col. iii. 12. It is worthy of obſervation, that a kind, benevolent ſpirit, exerciſed towards men; eſpecially the ſaints, in doing them good, is much ſpoken of in ſcripture, as an evidence of true religion. And the reaſon of this appears from the foregoing account of true holineſs.

and proud; ſeeking his own eaſe, pleaſure and honor, rather than the honor of Chriſt, and the promotion of his kingdom, and the good of mankind; whatever doctrines he profeſſes to embrace, and however full of religious zeal and devotion, he may appear to be at times, we have reaſon to conclude he is a ſtranger to true religion.

And by this rule every one may try his own religion. If it began in a belief that God loved him, and had beſtowed ſalvation upon him, &c. and all his religious joy and ſorrow, and darkneſs and light, reſpect his own intereſt in God's favour, &c. it has the appearance of falſe religion.* He who comes to

* Obj. St. John taught this religion. He

the knowledge of the truth, fixes on something infinitely more important than *ſelf*, and his own perſonal intereſt, as the object of his regard and purſuit. He from that moment devotes himſelf to the glory of God, and greateſt general good in the advancement of his kingdom. From this time he begins to

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ſays, "We love him, becauſe he firſt loved us," 1. John. iv. 19.

Ans. What is aſſerted here is, that God's love is firſt in the affair. Had he not firſt loved us, and given his ſon to die for us, and then called us by his grace, and given us a heart to love him, we had continued enemies to him. This is the plain ſenſe of the words, and is agreeable to innumerable other paſſages of ſcripture. Whereas the other ſenſe is quite forced, and makes the words ſay what they do not: They are not, we love him becauſe we firſt believed he loved us. Beſides, ſuch a ſenſe is contrary to the whole run of ſcripture, and the expreſs declaration of our Lord, who ſays, there is no true religion in ſuch love, ſee pages 151 to 158. And it is contrary to the whole

pray, and ſay, "Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be be done in earth as in heaven." And it now becomes his ſtudy and labour, to promote this grand intereſt, by ſerving God and his generation; and thus he ſeeks firſt the kingdom of God. He whoſe religious diſcoveries, views and exerciſes are not of this kind, and do not iſſue in this, may ſafely con-

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bible, in another view. According to ſcripture we can have no evidence of our intereſt in God's ſpecial love, and pardoning mercy, until we believe and embrace the goſpel; and love to God, or what implies it, is the only evidence we can have that God loves us. It is therefore impoſſible, on good grounds, to believe God loves us with a deſign to ſave us, before we love him. We muſt *firſt* love him, before we can have the eaſt evidence that God loves us. They therefore who believed God loved them, while they had no love to him, and have begun to love God wholly upon this belief, have believed a lie, in the face of the whole bible: And all their religion is nothing but deluſion.

lude himſelf a ſtranger to true religion.

If this moſt fundamental difference between true religion and falſe, were attended to by public teachers; and they laboured to keep it in view, in all their deſcriptions of the chriſtian's character and exerciſes, and ſet the doctrines and precepts of the goſpel in this light; it would tend to kill the falſe comfort and confidence of thoſe who have a ſelfiſh religion, and undeceive them. And on the contrary, it would tend greatly to the inſtruction, enlargement and joy of the true friends of God, and his kingdom.

But, inſtead of this, how common is it to hear the preacher ſpeak of religion, as if it conſiſted altogether in ſelfiſhneſs! To repre-

ſent the hopes and fears, the joys and ſorrows, and all the exerciſes of the chriſtian, as wholly ſelfiſh and treat of all the doctrines and duties of chriſtianity in this light! How common to find arminians, neonominians, profeſſed calviniſts, antinomians, or whatever other name they may bear, and however they may differ in other things, all agreeing in this! This is to ſtun and ſtarve the chriſtian; and feed and ſtrengthen ſuch as have a lie in their right hand.

FINIS.

Extract from President EDWARD'S *sermon on the importance of the knowledge of Divine truth.*

PROCURE, and diligently use other books [than the Bible] which may help you to grow in this knowledge.---There are many excellent books extant, which might greatly forward you in this knowledge, and afford you a very profitable and pleasant entertainment in your leisure hours There is doubtless a great defect in many, that through a loathness to be at a little expense, they furnish themselves with no helps of this nature. They have a few books indeed, which now and then on Sabbath-days they read; but they have had them so long, and read them so often, that they are weary of them, and it is now become a dull story, a mere task to read them.----

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H79

ERATA.

Page 21 bottom, read, and manifeſt.

Page 43 bottom, read, of the nature of true &c.

Page 45 top, read, to whom &c.

Page 64 line 5 read, ſo far as they &c.

Page 65 line 9 read, is ſo difficult &c.

Page 100 line 9 read, is the only ſtandard &c.

Page 184 line 14 read, which therefore &c.

191 line 12 for many, read, may &c.